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GIFT OF

Ida Lewis Bentley



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TO VIND
ALPHABETIC

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With good will To all

Ida Lewis Bentley

This has continued, at irregular intervals, up to the present time, and it is from this accumulation of writings that "Sifted Thru" has been sifted.

The majority of the writers I never met in flesh and blood; and, altho many of them were well-known writers, I was unfamiliar with their writings. In many instances I saw the writer as plainly as I would see any one in the physical body; while, at other times, I saw the writing only.

The object in submitting these communications to the public is three-fold: First, to convey to those who are ready to receive it, a plain, sensible idea of after-death conditions, which must of necessity vary according to individual enlightenment, influenced by selfish or unselfish aims, desires and purposes;

Second, to convey the truth, that the expression of life, immediately following death, is not affected, so far as character goes, and the comprehension of life's purposes and problems, by the event called death, and to let it be known that this "next plane" is still the earth plane, only in finer vibrations;

Third, that a Christ-like self-renunciation, in loving service for the betterment of all humanity, is the only way to Heaven, and that Love Divine the only Light which will never fail.

"Sifted Through," by Mrs. I. L. Bentley, is a book containing a remarkable message for the world of today. Together with specially designed and beautifully bound covers, it may be an ideal gift book for a friend or loved one.

Price, postpaid, \$1.05

I. L. BENTLEY

2500 Beachwood Drive

Los Angeles, Calif.

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Sifted Through

Communications from the Invisible Side
of Earth Life as Received

By

IDA LEWIS BENTLEY

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3/21/20*



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1920

FOREWORD

IN THE turmoil and tumult of present-day conditions, every thoughtful person views with concern and approval any avenue which assumes to answer the questions of a perplexed world or to lead humanity out of darkness into light.

Just in proportion as death has been to mankind, its great unilluminated problem, so has mankind grasped at every suggestion of actual guidance in its solution.

The recent years, whose events have so amazingly rent the veil between the visible and the invisible, have revealed the enlightening processes of great sorrow. It is well that this is so, for by this means will the balance be hung true.

Notwithstanding the sincere efforts which are being made in every direction to assist in world problems, one lamentable lack is overwhelmingly apparent. This is best defined as a lack of a sense of individual responsibility as to conditions and their adjustment.

The "Dhammapada," or "Path of Virtue," one of the most practical ethical handbooks of Buddhism, contains the following great sentences:

"Earnestness is the path of immortality, thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die, those who are thoughtless are as if dead already."

The Christian Scriptures contain this ringing challenge. "The last enemy to be destroyed is Death." Obviously, Death may be both literal and figurative. Its mastery must be in its figurative state before it can ever hope to be literal.

Selfishness is death! It may well be that selfishness is the last great enemy to be destroyed. Selfishness prevents the soul from attacking such problems as individual responsibility. The clarion call of the ever-present moment is for the soul, sufficiently strong, to abandon the pettiness of self-interest, the meagerness of self-protection and, by the power of the living Christ, accept the grave and glorious responsibility of giving the high message of the beacon light of the ages.

SUZANNE DEAN.

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LAW

Can the high-tide leave the ocean?
Or the billows fail the sand?
When the full moon sails the heavens,
Led by Law's unerring hand?

Will the rose forget its blooming,
If no loving eye should fall
On its fragrant, witching beauty,
Hiding in the cold gray wall?

Will the lark forget its fledglings,
Or the robin cease to nest,
If the storm should gather darkly
Round the distant mountain's crest?

Do the trees forget to blossom,
When the white mists weave their pall?
Have the ripened leaves of autumn
Ever once refused to fall?

If your heart-aches and your sorrows
Should arise a mountain high,
Still the sun would climb the heavens
And its glory fill the sky.

Lo, the crashing of the thunder
Ever speaks of danger past,
Ne'er does it precede the coming
Of the lightning's baleful shaft.

Never will the starlight, gleaming
 On the river's rushing tide,
 See it bounding madly backward
 To the rugged mountain side.

Moonlight, starlight, blooming, dying,
 Summer's sun or winter's blast,
 Weeping, laughing, hating, loving,
 Lo! the Law doth hold thee fast!

Child of earth, arise! awaken!
 Destiny and thee are one.
 Thou alone can free or fetter,
 Speed or halt the journey run.

Earth may reel and mountains crumble,
 And the angry surges roar,
 Love shall give thee fearless pinions,
 Love shall open Heaven's door.


Let no witching song beguile thee
 From the Truth which God has given;
 Love Divine, thy mighty Savior,
 Love, thy only hope of Heaven.

Wouldst thou find thy long-sought Heaven?
 Wouldst thou gain some distant Aiden?
 Wouldst thou find some sainted maiden
 Whom the angels long have claimed?
 Wouldst thou find life's dearest treasure,
 Which thy soul alone hath named?
 Give thy love in fullest measure,
 Pour it freely, o'er and o'er,
 And thy soul from out earth's shadows
 Shall be lifted evermore!

—P.

CHAPTER I

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

 HERE are a few points I wish to make. I have been here almost seven years; and since I got over my hours of suffering, questioning and wondering why—wondering why I could not have seen things in their *true* light, while I was in the body, and, seeing, have changed my whole life history? Wondering why you had to suffer so, and why I had no power to help you? This Why business never gets anyone anywhere that he wants to go; but when at last the Light did come to me, and I saw the *real* mission of Christ in the world, then, a Watcher came to my rescue and I went to work.

Do not feel badly if people do refuse to believe my message, or even say spiteful things about it and you—they have always refused to believe the best things God has ever sent thru His messengers.

The people of earth have always wanted something mysterious and hard to understand, and when mental difficulties and sorrows have overtaken them, they have doubted still more the beautiful things, and cursed, or denied, the God who had lovingly made things so easy, they *would not see*. This crops out in us when we refuse to appreciate the love and beauty that is all around us every day, until we find ourselves bereft of it, and then, we *know* how beautiful were the toil-worn hands that ministered unto us, and how great the love that kept the tired feet going.

Try and teach people that wrong-doing brings suffering, and all the affirmations in the world will not save them from it. A very selfish person never does right; such a thing is impossible, and pure selfishness is more often the prime factor in affirmations than otherwise.

Those who have *earned* suffering will surely get it, and, if by some hook or crook, one dodges it while in the physical body, he will suffer here, and suffering is much more keenly felt *here*.

As a person vibrating upon the material plane and, unable to rise beyond the material plane consciousness, is unable to comprehend this finer plane consciousness, so a person here who knows nothing of the earth plane experiences would not be able to understand a great many of the coarser, heavier vibrations of materiality. You know how sensitive I always was to suffering and cruelty in any form, especially if associated with bloodshed; even now, I recall vividly some of my pet hens that went the way hens are born to go—but I found that I could go into the hospitals and on the battlefield and realize very little, perhaps none, of the suffering, except mental suffering; and *that*, we the workers, were keenly alive to.

Awful as the war has been, it has worked an immense amount of good; for one thing, it has opened the door between the physical realm and this finer realm wider than it was ever opened before. A great need always makes a great demand, which will always connect with the waiting supply; this is Law.

Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right, but the persons who do the adjusting must know what right is, and they usually learn only through suffering. I once found a woman on her knees beside a dandelion, sobbing as if her heart would break. I reached out to her in sympathy, and she told me that she once had a crippled sister who loved the dandelions, and who would beg her to bring them in to her, but she, thinking mostly of herself, had refused to do so, because of the litter

they made; and now that little yellow flower proved a mirror, in which her selfishness was reflected. The little sister had for years been free from earth conditions, and in vain had the woman sought for her; but now that self-illumination had come, there was no law against their reunion, which one of our messengers brought to pass.

You asked me what constitutes a saint, and I asked the same question of one of our Instructors, and she said, "Saintship is a degree of attainment; any person whose life is hid with Christ in God, or, in other words, who is in all things dominated by Divine Love, is a saint." Beliefs and professions and strict adherence to prescribed forms and ceremonies have nothing whatever to do with the matter.

You notice that a great many people speak of all the various Masters, Teachers, and Illumined ones as being masculine—I have *not* found it so. Where I have been, I have found as many women as men Teachers. St. Paul's mother (who died at his birth) is as great a Teacher as *he* is—and that is saying much.

There is an after-death condition which lies very close to the earth and mingles with its lowest vibrations, where confusion reigns—bedlam let loose, as our father would say—but upon all these higher planes of expression, perfect order manifests.

Yes, we sleep, work, drink, bathe and eat, here. We do not eat much food and only the kind we need. In the physical body people eat great quantities of food they do not need, and Nature works so hard to rid herself of the surplus, that the individual is tired all the time, and incapable of doing his best. Here we always feel light and free in all our movements, and the air around *us* is just as dense to *our* bodies as is the atmosphere you are in, to you. The difference lies in the fact that we are not fettered by abnormal or surplus food, drink, clothing, fear or race ideas.

No, this is not the heaven world, *from* which it is said the soul descends to rebirth upon earth.

Everything here is artistic and rhythmic, and rhythm is always constructive. That is why poetry and music both soothe and inspire; rhythm also heals, if intelligently employed, for it is only when you are out of tune, that is, out of rhythm, that you get tired and ill.

When a man *really* prays, he enters into harmony with the higher forces and connects with them, and when the thing he prays for, under the law of rhythm touches his vibrations, he gets it. That is why Faith is so important—it keeps the door open, so to speak, for the object prayed for, to enter in, when the time comes.

True religion is rhythmic, for all real religion has Love Divine for its basis, and Love Divine is rhythm in perfection.

Of course you know *Who* stands at the head of all religious movements, and where I now am, I should say that everybody is religious, that is, devotional; and the Master of all religions comes here and talks with us freely, and we have some of the most beautiful and inspiring religious services, which lift us to a plane where wonderful Beings can come to us—even the Lord Christ Himself has vehicles of expression here.

The heads of every division of earth activity are devotional; every aspiring soul is, and he must recognize a Supreme Power and Entities of great wisdom, beyond himself.

Aspiration, that is, devotion, lifts the soul ever higher and higher, and the higher in the scale that one rises the greater becomes his capacity for enjoyment. It is through your finest faculties that you get your greatest enjoyment on your physical plane. Of course if one *will* stay upon the *swine*-plane of enjoyment, he is permitted to do so, but the time has come when every swinish individual *must* speed up his evolutionary process or be left behind for the next evolutionary cycle.

In regard to the soul-mate problem, I know very little, but should say that it has a basis of truth. Long ages ago all creatures contained within themselves both sexes. Sex is only a matter of convenience in Nature's great plan, and it seems to me we must eventually reach that goal when the male and female principles become perfectly balanced in us, in which case we will be soul-mated, or twin-souled—without selfishly absorbing another.

Everything on earth has its soul life, its inner beauty, which very few can recognize with their senses, and much less express, but here this soul life is brought to expression and recognition, and earth, air, fire and water become glorified, and the beings to which they give life are seen, heard and felt.

When the earth tree is cut down, the *real* tree is still left standing in all its beauty of form, or its deformity, as may be. When you pluck a rose you may or may not sever its finer counterpart. If you do not, the rose will fade very quickly, regardless of favorable conditions.

Flowers remain fresh in some homes much longer than they do in others, also water keeps fresh longer. When the medicine men develop their *finer* senses, they will know that in solving the disease problems they put their cart before the horse in many cases.

I will tell you this that I know—those people who have believed in God as a gigantic man, vastly better than themselves when at their best, are just as well off here as those who believe in no God, but Infinite Intelligence or Cosmic Consciousness, or Universal Mind. Those who have a lofty ideal personified, grow much more rapidly and are much happier and more dependable.

The world has always persecuted, neglected, and failed to appreciate its greatest Teachers, for the world cannot understand spiritual things, and it does not want to give up its sensual pleasures; for it does not know that the Spirit is unfailing joy and light and peace.

—E. M. L.

CHAPTER II

THE PROPHECY

I. RUNNING ANTELOPE, Orator of my people, have received a messenger from the Great Lodge of the palefaces, saying: Behold my tribeswoman, Daughter of the Great Spirit—she who hath the far vision, and sitteth in the door of the wigwam of shadows and talketh with the big Chiefs beyond the door of shadows, desireth thee to prophesy unto her, in the council room of the Wigwam of the Great Spirit, regarding her people.

This I say unto thee, pale face daughter of mighty warriors—the Great Spirit sorroweth over His children, for He took this great country from the hands of the Red men and gave it to the pale faces, saying: “Behold, all this I give unto thee, but see that thou dost follow the Light, and at evening, when the embers from my fires have ceased to glow red in the west, let each chief gather the members of his tribe together and each smoke the peace pipe with his neighbor,” but they would not. They forgot the words of the Great Spirit, and some said aloud, “There is no Great Spirit—no Great Wigwam beyond my own.”

In many ways hath the Great Spirit sought to warn and counsel His children; He has spoken in the voice of the tempest that swoopeth down like a vulture that seizeth its prey and droppeth it wheresoever it will. He has spoken in the voice of the great waters, and hath hurled them madly back upon the wigwams of his children; and against His own mighty wigwams, with their fingers pointing upward, He hath hurled His fiery

arrows, and the flames have devoured them; and yet His children have closed their ears and heard not.

They have covered the great plains where the deer and buffalo once fed, with their iron horses, and the air is polluted with the breath of their firewater. They have laid low the great trees of the mighty forests, and have slain without mercy the occupants thereof; they have burrowed through mountains, and their wigwams swim through the waters like fishes; they spread their wings and fly through the clouds beyond the strength of the eagle; they have builded their wigwams with bones of steel, and they rear their heads proudly far toward the heavens, but the strong have forgotten the Great Spirit and the words He spake to them in the council room, and they have forgotten to smoke the peace-pipe with their brothers.

The big Chiefs of the land wear costly blankets and much wampum, and their brother's children cry for bread; and in the land of plenty there is great famine, and this saith the Great Spirit to Running Antelope, standing in the doorway with his face turned toward the sun: "Behold, my people have grown mighty and they wear their wampum and their blankets proudly, but I see through their wigwams, and I hear the cries of their helpless ones, and their wampum is stained with the blood of the hungry. They have forsaken my counsel and turned their faces away from me; they have bred wolves in their midst, and their wantonness hath produced reptiles and crawling things, and lo! that which they themselves have created, they shall themselves be devoured by."

And this is the vision that thy red brother seeth: Flames and smoke and the roar of mighty tempests, and of mighty waters devouring all in their pathway, and the land is burned up and no rain falleth, and the inhabitants cry aloud for help; and from the depths of sleeping mountains, wrapped in great silence, there

shall come forth a mighty roar and the air is rent with the cries of terror, while the earth staggereth as the brave, overfull of firewater, staggereth when he seeketh his wigwam at night; and from the Land of Darkness shall come forth a mighty Warrior, against whom no great Chief may hurl an arrow, and this Warrior entereth the great wigwams where the embroidered blankets and much wampum are found, and he gathereth the young braves from their blankets, and the fairest maidens of their tribes he taketh with him; and the great Chiefs and their wives cry aloud and remember that somewhere it is written, there is a Great Spirit, and the sun of this day descendeth, and darkness broods over the land. But keep thou, O paleface, who sitteth in the doorway of shadows, thy watch-fires burning brightly before thy people, until the sun of tomorrow dawns, when Running Antelope, the Orator of his tribe, hopeth to greet thee in the presence of the Great Chief, the Father of all, sendeth.

CHAPTER III

THE POWER OF LOVE

I STOOD beside the main entrance of a large tent and, with many others, gazed at the scene before me.

A woman was talking—tremblingly, brokenly, she was telling the people how she had found her Savior, and had been lifted up, from sin and shame and suffering, to peace and rest and joy. She spoke of the Love—the *wondrous* Love that could embrace one as vile as herself; that could ease her pain, and in the midst of blackest poverty, make her forget herself in light and joy.

Thus the woman, in broken sentences, poured out her very soul, with a power that touched the hearts of those who listened, until a fit of coughing stopped her.

A woman of the street dying of tuberculosis, had found Heaven in the very heart of Hell. One by one they followed her, these reclaimed ones, drunkards, dope-fiends, liars, thieves, wantons—poor outcasts, wretches that no decent person dare take into his home—all telling the Story—filthy diseases washed away and joy they could not express, filling their souls to overflowing.

They told of broken vows fulfilled, of character reclaimed, of cruelty changed to kindness. There was much singing and shouting, and the scene impressed me greatly.

A man standing near me said, "A mighty Power is demonstrating here tonight—what is the Power, do you know?"

"I do *not* know," I said frankly, "it cannot be fear, for there is no evidence of that."

"You cannot scare a man by threatening him with hell, when deep in his heart he knows he is already in it—no, fear has not wrought these miracles—are you sure you do not know?"

Halls and rooms full of well-dressed, well-fed, intellectually self-satisfied sinners, came crowding in upon my memory; sinners who were not yet awakened to the fact, that the sins which cause the deepest suffering do not fall under the "Thou-shalt-nots" of the Ten Commandments. There was also always a generous sprinkling of Ten Commandment sinners, who had not been guilty of being discovered, and were still on familiar terms with the wealthy class.

But these people who came to me—they did not go away repentant of wrong-doing and resolved to lead useful and honorable lives, in place of their idle, frivolous ones; and, if there were any broken-hearted, they went away as they came.

Long lines of figures and zodiacal signs danced before my eyes, but I pushed them away, so to speak, as so much waste paper. I felt suddenly as if the bottom had dropped out from under me, and the *one* thing most needful I had missed.

I turned to the man who had spoken to me and said, "I *wish* I knew."

"Was there nothing in all your teachings that caused a man to right about face?" said the stranger kindly.

"O, yes," I replied, eagerly, "I have seen the weak-willed grow strong-willed, and the undecided grow decided and self-reliant."

"I have seen cattle do that, when they saw a green field before them," said a man's voice back of me.

I stood silent and convicted. Yes, all of this transforming thought power I had taught and used, had been utilized on the material plane to gratify *selfish desires*. The bodily senses, pride, ambition, vanity—

all had played as important factors, in demonstrations that we had recognized with so much joy. No, it was *not* the same Power I was seeing demonstrated here before me, for *this* Power was working against the selfish instincts, desires and appetites.

The people began to sing, "I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and His Glory, of Jesus and His Love." I looked up at the stranger and said, "No, I do not understand this at all. I do not believe in the literal interpretation of that New Testament story. While I acknowledge frankly there is *something* here that my experiences with psychology and thought force do not explain, I cannot see how this myth, beautiful as in some ways it is"—

The stranger stopped me, "Can anything beautiful be untrue? Can power ever be anything else than power? Sister, one thing only thou lackest: Love."

The stranger vanished. I felt alone, desolate, helpless, blind. I clutched at what I thought was a tree, but there was nothing there. I went a little way, and sat down upon a rock—it crumbled into nothingness under me. From somewhere came the sound of music, a heavenly voice chanted, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Love, I am but sounding brass and clanging cymbal."

I sprang to my feet—"O, God, give *me* this Love!" I cried.

A boy blowing a little tin horn went by me. "That is just what I did," I sobbed, "and I thought it was angels' music." I covered my face for very shame.

One of the smartest things I ever did, from my own point of view, was to demonstrate that I could drink coffee and not have a raging headache follow it. O! the time, strength, effort, I put into acquiring the ability to pamper my appetite contrary to the Law of my being, and then say to those who admired or envied me, "Behold *me*—the great victorious warrior!" Oh, how small, contemptible it all seemed.

I hurried blindly on, away—*somewhere—anywhere*. I paused and looked about me. Far up a wild and rugged mountain I stood, where gigantic rocks had been torn from the bowels of the mountains by some inconceivable upheaval—and caves, and grottos, and altars, were all about me. I was conscious that I stood where a white woman in flesh and blood had never stood. I saw before me images—horrible objects carved rudely from stone—savage man's ideas of powers above and beyond himself, they were; but one among them all fired and held my attention. Crude and ugly it was, but its ugliness was clothed in a robe of rosy light, and its brow was wreathed with blue and white forget-me-nots.

A woman lay exhausted upon the stones before it, and her sad eyes were fixed imploringly upon its outstretched arms—it was the God of Love.

In all the Himalayas it was the only object her poor bleeding heart could cling to with loving confidence; it personified the only One who could understand and sympathize.

“O, yes,” I cried, “there is something there—the outer or visible form and appearance does not matter—it is the *something* that the soul is conscious of.” Memory suddenly produced some long-forgotten words from the Norse: “Beautiful Baldar, the gentle hearted.”

Yes, in every land and clime, among all peoples, every nation, kindred and tongue—the idea, more or less clearly defined, has been entertained, of some beneficent Power—tender, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, loyal, forgiving, patient and true.

Oh, how they stand out—the great souls of earth, who have forsaken all for the sake of ungrateful humanity; who have lived and suffered and died and, triumphant in death, have still gone on giving their lives to the world and its work.

“I can see it,” I cried, “I can see that it is Love

that wins, that lifts upward, transforms, comforts and strengthens."

I went to where my dark-skinned sister was lying, on the rocks before the image, and prostrated myself beside her. "O, God," I cried, brokenly, "reveal to me this Love Divine, transform me, lift me up and strengthen me for service!"

I felt a presence and looked up; the man who had stood beside me in the tent door now stood before me, but so transformed in his shining robe of white that only my inner self could have recognized him. "Sister," he said gently, "crude as that image with its wide-extended arms is, it suggests even to you, a tender, sympathetic, *all-embracing* Love, and before that Love you bow, humbly praying that it fill yourself with its Self, and why? Because you recognize that it is the Power that alone can satisfy your highest aspirations; because the *soul* knows it is *the* goal toward which it tends, the Ultimate—the One Reality—the Life Everlasting—the One Light. Tens of thousands of human beings bow before the image of Lord Gautama—the blessed Buddha—this morning. Why is he blessed? Because he is illumined. What illumined him? Love Divine. It is the only power that *can* illumine, and it is the Love he represents that draws his followers and binds them to him. Tender, compassionate, understanding all, forgiving all. O, Light of Asia, these snow-capped mountains shall, ere long, echo to the sound of thy returning footfalls! Then those of thy people who have worshiped the Light and Truth that radiated *through* thee, and *not the outer form* of it, shall rejoice greatly. From Greenlands icy mountains to India's coral strands, yea, far beyond to the desert's sand, and lonely isles amid the ocean's waves, the Cross is gleaming in the light of this morning's sun; not the cross of the Norseland, not the cross of ancient Egypt, but the Cross of Calvary; and what does that emblem mean, my Sister? Love, Love Divine. The Love that is all-

embracing, the Love that brings peace and rest and joy to the soul of the vilest sinner of all sinners; the Love that sees no sin, only the experiences along the pathway that every soul must learn *through suffering*.

O, Man of Calvary, Light of the World—soon the people of earth shall hear the sound of Thy footsteps and Thy Voice, once more, amid the angry clash of warring tongues, and above the din of battle. Then those of Thy people who have worshiped the Light, the Love that radiated through Thee, and not the outer form of Thee, shall welcome Thee with great joy. How long, O my people," cried the radiant One, stretching out his arms to the valleys, still enwrapped in darkness, "will it be before you learn to know that when the Infinite manifests, He can make Himself known to your consciousness only through form; but it is not the form, but the Power which clothed Itself *in* form, that is the One Reality."

A shaft of sunlight touched the snowy top of the gigantic mountain above me, and fell in a glittering flood of light over me. My heavenly helper had vanished.

Now I *know* this all-embracing Love. I see a new heaven and a new earth. Within *me* it cries, "*I am the resurrection and the life! I am the Bread of Life and the Water of Life, and, if any man eat and drink of Me, he shall hunger and thirst no more.*"

I embrace my fellow beings, one with me, God's own beloved; blind perhaps, deaf perhaps, ignorant perhaps—like the little child that has not yet learned that fire will burn, and then in its resentment at the suffering the knowledge has cost him, strikes at the flame and burns himself still more.

"I am the Love," says the Infinite, "that loves that child, be he old or young, in the days that man counts years. I am the Love that stays the hand of the slayer and cries, Oh, cause not *needless* suffering; pause and think. I look from the eyes of that bird, and sing in his wondrous song. I hold back the hand of the money-mad

destroyer. I cry, woodman spare that tree! take not unnecessarily the form my life is manifesting in. I pick up the crushed and droopy flowers that man, in his mad haste—for what?—has trampled on as weeds.” “A bruised reed He shall not break and smoking flax He shall not quench.”

O my beloved, ponder well the mystic meaning of those words, and may the Love that has in infinite ways been manifesting through the ages long, fill your souls with Its unquenchable flame—so shall joy unspeakable and the peace that passes understanding be yours forever more.

—E. K.

CHAPTER IV

SOWING AND REAPING

“**A**S YE sow, so shall ye reap”—thinkest thou, O man, to escape a Law that changest not? The Law that holdeth thee in its grasp from the cradle to the grave, and from beyond to the cradle again—the cradle thou didst weave for thyself from brambles and thorns, or from golden threads, or iron links.

Day after day thou dost come to school, until the lessons of earth are learned. Seekest thou to escape the irksome task the Almighty has set for thee? Thou shalt prove every sum thou addest, until thou addest aright. The Law of the Harvest Field compellest every one to reap the harvest he himself has sown. Hast thou thought only of thyself as thou hast journeyed along life's pathway? Remember, that if thou hast thought *first* of thyself always, thou hast thought *only* of thyself, the self that must perish with all it calls its own.

O darkest hour of my darkest night,
Was the hour I stood with myself alone;
Where back of me rolled the haunted years,
And specters mocked in my blinding tears,
And taunted me with my fearsome plight,
When I stood with myself alone!

Talk ye of a God of Love?
What, I ask of thee, is love?

When thou knowest within thine own soul *what* Love is, then thou wilt know the One True God, Whom to

know is life eternal. When within thine own soul thou dost know a *changeless* love, always patient, tender, free from self-seeking, uninfluenced by the words and conduct of others, and moving on like the sun in the heavens—content to give, then thou hast passed the necessity of birth and death, and dost indeed *know* eternal life.

What is this that man calls death?
Freedom from his mortal breath?
O vain man from Truth secluded!
O vain man by *self* deluded!
Will the crow the lark's song sing?
Or the Ice King roses bring?
Will the purple grapes entwine
From the heart of eglantine?

Nay, no apotheosis came
To relieve me of my shame,
And I gained no heavenly shore
From the streets of Baltimore.

It was a prescience of the reaping time and what it must inevitably bring to me, that caused my room to become horror-haunted, and Law, black as a raven to my shrinking soul, knocked at my door and was admitted by me; and there I argued and plead in vain, for only one unrelenting and changeless answer was given me; and when, in my agony of soul, I stretched my arms into the unseen, and called to my beautiful one, my soul's ideal, I still received the same grim answer as before; for what had I to do with ideals when I, myself, had madly trampled them in the dust? What had I to do with Love, the pure, the beautiful, when passion's fierce fires had scorched and blighted it in my life? What had I to do with heavenly things, when I had only sown to the flesh that which *with* the flesh must perish?

O child of earth, it is a fearful thing to stand naked and alone with self and your Creator, and know that you have defamed every beautiful opportunity given to you.

Every poet is more or less of a prophet, and as he frequently changes his spelling and the construction of his sentences, to preserve the rhythm of his productions, so he often changes that which *seems* to be, into that which *is*—for the Law of Rhythm carries him far beyond his present boundaries, into the larger and clearer vision of the yet-to-be.

Many have said there is no room in the world today for the dreamer, but I say to you the Dreamer is often a connecting link between the manifest and the unmanifest; and according to the *nature* of thy dreams, O Dreamer, is the nature of the manifestation that followeth. Can one handle a serpent and avoid its fangs? Can one play with an asp and escape its sting? I say unto thee, that whoever uses the talents God has given him, for base and unlawful purposes, shall drain the cup of suffering to its dregs.

You will never find happiness anywhere, O happiness-seeker, until you find within yourself an unfailing supply, then you will take it with you where'er you go. But I tell thee, truly, peace and joy are born of love—the One Love—and only in one way can the soul attain it. Enter ye into the Holy of Holies, O soul of *the* Soul, and listen to the Voice that speaketh there—the Voice of the universes—of a million million suns revolving in the great Celestial Light, revolving in perfect harmony with the melody of Perfect Being.

When, crushed and broken, O soul, thou dost make an unconditional surrender of thyself, when, in thy distress thou criest, "The foundations of the earth are broken, and the heavens by the power of Godhead are rent;" for the cry of a soul in its last despair moves the universe of Being, and within itself contains the loving Father's answer, "My son, here am I." Then

thou wilt know the Christ, the beloved Son—the Wonderful One—the unerring Counselor—the Prince of Peace Everlasting.

Lo! my hands with nails are torn!
I the cruel thorns have worn,
I the sins of earth have borne,
Suffering Man of Calvary!

Love transcending, love of mother,
Love beyond the love of brother;
My poor soul long starved and broken
Now receives the heavenly token
Snow-white Dove of Peace.

Not a raven grimly croaking,
While I plead from grief surcease,
But the snow-white Dove of Peace!

Stripped and naked, the trembling soul reaches out for Power, that it instinctively senses, but has not learned to *know*; even as the growing vine reaches out its tendrils toward the trellis it senses, but cannot see. O strong indeed is that new-born soul that seeks not for the Rock of Refuge wherein to hide, that calls not for some strong arm to lean upon.

It is but a small part of death to die, and one who lives for self knows not what life is. O the joy of a soul redeemed from selfishness to selflessness! In the light of a selfless love, the lurking shadows flee and a new heaven and earth appear. In *this* light one sees all things as they really are; outside this light one sees nothing aright. Basking in the light and warmth of this Presence, the brambles and briars by the wayside are glorified, and become objects of beauty. Happy voices that one has never noticed before will call from earth, air and water.

Out from the sin-burdened soul, touched by the Heal-

ing Hand of an Infinite Love, goes the fever of unrest, and in the peace that follows one can hear, and see, and know. Such joy had never been mine before. The ghouls and goblins no longer grinned and mocked at me from Nature's rocky wilds; no longer demons shrieked and taunted me in the watches of the night; no more the great Karmic Law of cause and effect, grim and unrelenting, croaked to my soul-pleadings, "Never-more"—for Love is the fulfilling of the Law, and of all law it is *the* Law, and when to this Love the soul has made an unconditional surrender, it fears no more the Karmic Law. For him, the planets sing no fateful song, but one grand symphony of love and trust.

Long centuries ago a Hebrew Poet, catching a glimpse of Something above and beyond the clouds and lightnings of Sinai, cried aloud, "The redeemed of the Lord shall come with singing into Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall find gladness and joy—and sorrow, and mourning, and sighing shall flee away."

When the Perfect Love which casts out all fear is made manifest, the soul sings; it is full of joy and *must* express it. Does it seem strange, this truth: great sorrow and great joy find their most perfect expression in song? The two extremes touch each other, and there is but one quivering chord between the two.

Unto the magic touch of Love, the pure, the beautiful, the true, every door opens and all hidden treasures are revealed. The distant Aiden is seen to be the beautiful here and now, and angels come to every soul purified by holy love.

Sing, O ye who are redeemed from the law of sin and death! Let your *lives* express joy, ye who have found the fount of perennial youth! The mighty Orpheus, by the power of his magic touch, lifted mortals to heaven, and St. Cecelia, by the same power, drew the angels down, for love is perfect rhythm and moves worlds of

beings; yea, it is the one grand chorus to the hymn the universes sing.

For what, O mortal, is your world? One spark from off Life's anvil hurled. What is the Word that was lost, O ye blind leaders of the blind? Within one's self only can the Word be lost, and within one's self it *must* be found. Within yourself lies the Key which unlocks all mysteries—have you found it?

Beauty, such as man never dreamed of, flashes and glows before his senses and thrills his being with joy unspeakable, and connects him with new life forces welling up from the depths of Being, when he has found the Key.

Hope, thou bright star of the soul! Thou star sometimes obscured by doubt and the fear that is born of it—but unwaning and never setting, thou shinest on forever, until thy light is lost in the glorious light of the great Forever of Realization. All we ever had is forever our own.

I went to the spot where my flowers grew,

My beautiful violets, sweet and blue;

My flowerets set in a frame of green,

Where the gray mists fall on the water's sheen;

But the snows lay heaped on the violets' bed,

My beautiful violets cold and dead!

I called, and a Voice from out the wold

Came forth from the caverns, frosty and cold;

"They are not dead—they shall rise again,

When the sweet south wind and the springtime rain
Shall lift the snows from the violets blue,

Your loved and lost shall return to you."

And Love is the gentle zephyr that blows,

And lifts from our earth the deep, drifted snows,


And Love is the Life—though it seemeth dead,

That shall spring for aye, from earth's wintry bed.

—P.

CHAPTER V

THE STORY OF JOHN AUGUSTINE

Y NAME is John Augustine. I was the son of a wealthy father and a fashionable mother. Unless the doctrine of re-birth is true I see no way to explain my life history. I hope it is true, for it will give me an opportunity to make good on the plane where this time I made such wretched blunders.

My father was a man with a large degree of worldly sense, and my mother, having brought me into the world, shifted the responsibility of my upbringing upon high-priced help.

After my graduation from college my father insisted that I take up some honorable profession. "I have supported you long enough," he said, "and you must henceforth rely upon yourself. I give you just ten days in which to decide what profession you will follow."

"I will decide right now," I said, "I will be a clergyman." If a thunderbolt had fallen in our midst, the effect would have been scarcely more pronounced. I was, perhaps, the most astounded of all. To this day I have no explanation for my remark, for as far as I know I had never thought of such a career before. The words seemed to speak in and through me.

My mother broke the silence by exclaiming, "O, how perfectly lovely! To be able to say 'My son, the Rev. John Augustine' will give me prestige with a certain class of really nice people who have never yet welcomed me."

I noticed my father grow very pale during my mother's remarks, at the close of which he said, solemnly, "My son, I suppose this has been in your mind for some time, for you surely would not be so rash as to choose *this* vocation without due consideration and an inner sensing of your fitness for the work. You will have to go to a theological school, but after you have finished the necessary course, you will receive no further help from me and must rely entirely upon your own ability."

Something in my father's tone and manner stirred me as nothing else ever had before, and I went to my room to think over my strange position. I sat down and reviewed my past life—"O, well," I thought, "my life has not been very bad, I have been real good, in comparison with some."

A voice from an unseen presence close beside me said solemnly, "One who is good because he fears to be bad, is not good at all."

I was terribly frightened, and went to bed trembling. In the morning, I thought, I will go to my father and tell him that I will become a lawyer, instead of a clergyman, but in the morning I felt that I must not change my strange resolution of the evening before.

The years went by, and I married a sensible girl and she insisted that I, from her standpoint, honor my calling. I thought it would be easy to write sermons and make fashionable calls and grace certain social functions with my honored presence—but I found I was doomed to hard labor and constant criticism. As I had no other means of livelihood, I had to do my best.

I kept up my elocution and voice culture and spent many hours before the mirror studying gestures. I was, much to my dislike, obliged to study the Bible, and I spent much time in searching musty old volumes to find unique subjects and startling headlines for my sermons. I studied the poets, and quoted from them effectively. I grew very weary of it all, for it was really a

slave's life; but necessity and my wife kept me going.

Many great temptations assailed me, from which I often narrowly escaped. I needed self-discipline badly, and I got plenty of it. I never forgot the voice that spoke to me that eventful night that I chose my profession, and I learned that while Fear may prove a strong restraining rope it is one that galls very badly. Every time I went into the pulpit I felt like the hypocrite I was. I had a nervous fear lest I be found out. I grew sensitive to criticism, and inclined to argue or explain my conduct. I felt restless, like a prisoner who paces his narrow cell, vainly longing for freedom.

One little event in my childhood days kept constantly recurring to me, each time with more startling significance. When my mother was well out of the way, her well-paid help followed her example and shirked the responsibility of my care onto cheaper help, who were glad enough to earn a little, while my supposed caretakers had a good time. The one who usually cared for me at these times was an old colored mammy, the one person on earth I loved the best. She used to tell me weird stories of ghosts and apparitions and hoodoo spells. She also told me Bible stories, with many fantastic embellishments. She took me to revival meetings, which seemed to me to be held always in unfinished buildings, off unpaved streets. Religious fervor must have run high in those meetings, for, as I looked back, I could remember prayers, tears, shouts of joy and, most plainly of all, the stories that were told in the experience meetings; pathetic stories of disease, crime, poverty and drunkenness, all ending in joy and peace.

I had been in the habit of pushing these memories away from me with such words as "fanaticism" or "emotionalism," but when they persisted in haunting me, I read treatises upon hypnosis and suggestion. I also studied the workings of the sub-conscious mind, as represented by some authors who make of it a something omnipotent and omnipresent, yet subject to con-

trol and alteration by the conscious mind. The more I studied, the more puzzled and bewildered I became, and small wonder, for words and semi-meaningless phrases do not feed a starving soul. I studied Astrology, the Hermetic and Yogi and Vedanta philosophies, also symbols, numbers and colors, and very secretly dabbled in the phenomena of Spiritualism; but deeper grew the night around my soul, until in my distress of mind I prayed one genuine soul prayer, "O, God, what is Truth? Which way is *the Way?*"

It is now my firm conviction that any person who *pretends* to a virtue he has not, is compelled by circumstances to attain it sometime. Yes, the hypocrite is sometime compelled to live up to his professions. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless, who taketh His Name in vain." Those words have a deeper and more comprehensive meaning than is generally accredited to them. You cannot trifle with spiritual things without getting hurt. I am equally sure that as soon as one is ready for a new experience, it will come to him, like the river in its course, following the line of least resistance.

One day I went into the pulpit in an unusual frame of mind. A feeling of utter weariness was upon me; life was not worth living. What did it amount to? What was the use of going on, or trying to do anything? I had chosen for my text Isaiah 29:11, "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed." I languidly opened the Bible and my eyes fell upon the fifth chapter of James and, moved by a resistless force, I read: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is rusted and the rust shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped together treasures for

the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who have reaped your fields and which you have fraudulently kept back crieth, and the cries of the workers have entered the ears of the God of Heaven. For you have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton, you have nourished your hearts for the day of slaughter."

I suppose not half a dozen people in that church full of wealthy people knew that those words were in the Bible. I must have read them before, but I did not know they were there. I read the words wonderingly, and gazed at the big-eyed, wide-awake congregation before me. I felt dizzy, and a strange sensation, as of floating in the air, came over me. I opened my mouth and the words flowed through it like grain from the hands of the sower. I listened—yes—literally listened to myself talking, and was frightened at my speech, for reproof and denunciation was hurled at the people without mercy, until I sank trembling and exhausted upon my chair.

I saw my mother's eyes blazing with anger, and my wife was weeping. Only one person came to speak to me at the close of the services—my father. He took me by the hand and said: "My son, you have stirred up a hornet's nest, and before the week is out you will be asked to resign, but I am glad of it; at last you have done something worth while. I am an old man now, and I am tired of the hypocrisy and cant I see daily. For the first time in all your life, I am proud of you, my son."

I stood and watched my father as he entered his car and was borne away, and I marveled greatly; then I walked slowly home, where my wife and mother awaited me. A stormy scene followed my arrival.

The next day, while handling some old portfolios, two portraits fell upon the floor—Savonarola and John Wesley. I was struck by a similarity of features and expression, and a desire to read the lives of the two men and compare their characters and work took possession of

me. I obtained the books I needed and began my task. I cannot recall ever being so absorbed in reading anything before; I was fascinated and stirred to the depths of my being. Something within me rose up mightily, "I would give my all! I would suffer and die, if necessary, but how and where. O, for the power to be poured out through me as it was poured out through Savonarola and Wesley!"

My soul burned within me, and I began to pray, *real*, *genuine* prayers, and one day a Voice from one unseen said to me, "Go to the slums and preach the Good News." This time I received a two-fold shock; that Voice again had spoken, and told me to go to the slums! I, John Augustine, leave my luxurious home and go to such an unwashed, diseased, vile, law-breaking throng! Not I! I wanted to be a Savonarola, but I wanted to thunder in the ears of the rich, educated, polished, political, social and religious schemers! I knew what I wanted to be and do!

I grew restless, bewailed my fate, pitied myself, questioned myself, God, everybody and everything. I read Ingersoll, Darwin, Spencer and a host of other writers, and became more and more hopelessly lost in darkness. Fierce temptations assailed me, until it seemed to me I had been tempted to commit every crime in the Thou-Shalt-Nots; but there was always a restraining power that held me in its grip.

Rest assured, O troubled soul! God will never permit you to have an unnecessary experience; but He *may* permit you to come so near committing a great sin that you will know just how to understand and sympathize with those who go one step farther than yourself.

O, my friends, be patient with those among you who are impatient with God and all His manifestations—those tempestuous souls, self-seeking but ever unsatisfied, for such *may* be very near the Kingdom of Heaven.

I prayed in my desperation, determined I would

know whether there was a God or not. I prayed as men and women have ever prayed, when the evolving soul knows there is something to be attained beyond its present need and knowledge.

One night after one of these soul prayers something happened. Exhausted, I threw myself upon a couch and—fell asleep. I stood alone upon a great rock, and throngs of people passed before me; some in the vilest rags, and some in royal robes, gleaming with diamonds of untold wealth; there were the pinched faces of starving women and children, the sin-hardened, vice-bloated faces of men and women who had once known home and love and self-respect. Arms gaunt and wrinkled were extended, clutching frantically at the empty air, and arms white, well-rounded and gem-encircled, waved alluringly at the beholders. Suddenly I understood! These were all my brothers and sisters, who had been tempted in the Great School of Experience, even as I had been, and all were in the same school and journeying to the one Goal!

It was not denunciation they needed, but Truth, and Truth never separated from Love! "O, God," I cried, "fill me so full of Love of Thyself that I may love the most wretched sinner here before me!"

I felt a Presence and beheld a man in a simple flowing robe of snowy white, standing beside me. His arms were outstretched to the jostling throng, and in a voice of deep yearning love I heard Him say, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you to me as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you would not. I will go on to the end and, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me!" I fell on my knees before the Speaker—He was gone, but I knew at last that Love is the one thing above all others needed.

It was Love that caused Lord Buddha to leave wife and child and kingdom and riches, to go out to teach and bless the world—it was Love that made Lord Christ weep over His needy, erring children and, forgetting

His own weariness and pain, go among them and heal their sick; it was Love that wept at the tomb of Lazarus, Love that trod the whole bitter way, and forgave all at last! It was Love that sent Savonarola from his cell to warn the people of the long, hard way of suffering before them, if they did not repent; and it was Love that took him to the stake at last. It was Love that made Wesley strong to endure the vile and brutal treatment given him by church and rabble; Love that made him, like Paul, sing songs of joy in the midst of persecution, and endure to the end.

"Go to the slums and preach the Good News," yes, I would go gladly, for I had Good News to give at last. "Only go with me, O Living Christ, and I will gladly toil and suffer!" I cried. The next morning I told my wife I had decided to go to —— as a mission worker in the slums. She at once dispatched a servant to bring my mother; she came, and a few minutes later my father came. The two women pleaded, wept and coaxed me to give up my purpose, but when they found I still remained unmoved, they threatened me with the medical board and insane asylum; but here my father interfered: "Let the boy alone," he said sternly; "I will not have him meddled with. I have spent my whole life since childhood in the mad chase for gold, and now I stand face to face with—what? I can take none of my money with me, nothing that it will purchase. Empty handed I go, but sorrow and regret go with me; I look back over a lifetime spent among the swine, I have fed on husks, far from my Father's house, and starved in the midst of plenty. As I have given, I have received. Go pack your bag, my son, and I will drive you to the station."

Two hours later, I left my home forever. We drove slowly, in a round about way, and I poured into my father's ears the story I have given you. He was deeply moved, and told me many things about his life I had never known before. At the station, we took a tearful

but silent farewell of each other, and I never met him again in physical body.

Right here I pause to remind you that the Great Teacher said: "Judge not, for if you judge, you will be judged by others, in exactly the same measure." If you would only remember that those words are Absolute Truth, expressing a changeless Law, how careful you would be!

Friends, I beg of you, for your own sakes, to try and remember to pass judgment upon no one. You cannot possibly know the inside reasonings, motives, and impulses of the human heart, and even a hard-headed old business man may carry an aching heart and despise the wealth he has sacrificed his soul to gain.

Slum work is not easy work; a thousand trials and difficulties present themselves where you would not think of one; but the God, I had truly consecrated my life to, was with me, and I soon developed a healing power that made me a desirable person to have in the sick room. By the bed of the dying, I knelt in prayer; into the poverty stricken, crime-stained homes of the lowliest of the lowly, I went, and In His Name, offered my cup of cold water; and stood behind prison bars and sang of a Love that is mighty to save.

Into the loveless lives of these burdened ones I poured love. My wife obtained her freedom and re-married. My parents obtained their freedom from flesh and blood, and in my dreams I saw them and talked with them. I also saw and talked with angelic beings, who encouraged and strengthened and counseled me. I grew into an understanding of *why* dreams play such an important part in the Bible narratives, and I have since learned to know that my dreams were not mere dreams, but real experiences, and so the years rolled on.

One night I was sleeping in the outskirts of the city, where I had established a mission among a class of laboring people, who toiled almost unceasingly to eke

out a painful and meager existence. I was awakened by a great shouting and shrieks of "Fire! Fire!" I rushed from the house and saw a ramshackly tenement house in flames. On the upper floor, I knew the place well, lived a widow with an invalid mother and three puny children to care for, with the help of her only son, a bright, well disposed lad of twelve years.

The crippled grandmother had saved not only herself, but the little one in the bed with her, and the mother, now screaming frantically, had the two remaining babies clinging to her, but the boy was still in the blazing house.

There was not a moment to lose; catching a heavy coat from a man in the crowd, I plunged into the flames, and with a prayer that must have moved heaven to my aid, I fought my way thru smoke and flames, and at last found the unconscious lad, and bore him from the smoke-filled room—I know not how—to the open casement. Leaning far out, I dropped him upon the blanket stretched to receive him, and then—I felt the floor give way beneath me, and with a crash, a great flaming mass swooped down upon me. I heard, or thought I heard, a voice of wondrous sweetness singing, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in Thee I find," and a feeling of peace, such as I had never known before, came to me.

I heard a mighty roaring and rushing, as of tempest-lashed waves, hurled madly against a rock-bound shore, but I felt no pain and was unafraid. Lightly as a thistle down I floated, and felt myself clasped in the loving arms of one unseen.

For years I had felt a great heart longing for rural life, for hills and streams and fields, and I beheld it, when at last I awoke, for I was lying upon a green bank under graceful willow trees, bordering a stream of water babbling over shining, many colored stones. Fishes, beautiful as flowers, darted here and there thru

the crystal water, and birds sang joyously amid the green branches waving over my head.

It seemed to be early morning, and the air was sweet with the odor of unfolding flowers. A dainty fawn-like creature, with lustrous brown eyes, came trotting up to me and laid her head caressingly against my shoulder. Presently a bird alighted on my knee and turned its head in a most coquettish manner, as if expecting from me some demonstration of admiration or affection. Where was I? Surely not on earthly shores.

Slowly my past life unrolled before me, each event standing out boldly in a light I had never seen before, and, like a mighty cable stretched from shore to shore, ran the changeless Law of cause and effect.

Strains of music, sweet as the chords of an aeolian harp upon which the summer winds are playing, came from a clump of flowering shrubs near me; I sprang lightly to my feet and was greeted by a Stranger, my ideal of perfect manhood—that is, he seemed to be a combination of nobility, strength, self-control and kindness, which I always considered desirable masculine qualities; and the purity, tenderness and patience with which I had clothed ideal womanhood.

From a distance came the sound of a bell, silvery clear, and its sweet tones touched the secret depths of my inmost being, filling me with holy aspirations beyond anything ever before experienced. Instinctively I raised my eyes to the glorious sky above me, and cried in rapture, "O Righteous Father. I thank Thee! from the depths of my being I praise Thee!" My newly acquired friend stood with bowed head for a moment, and then, smiling, said, "Come with me," a summons I gladly obeyed.

Of the happy days which followed, I will speak briefly. We found no streets of gold, nor crowns, nor thrones—unless you take the words symbolically, as they were intended—but we *did* find many happy people wearing

white robes (not all of them, however), and many of them had harps and other musical instruments, from which they drew wondrous music, and we joined in singing paeans of joy such as mortal ears have never heard.

Often we sat wrapt in silent meditation, and to me it seemed that I, freed from all limitation, beheld the pages of the past unrolled before me; the past, illumined by Divine Purpose, glorious and beautiful—not a marred and tangled pattern, as in my blindness I had once thought it to be. In my consciousness I also touched the Future's unknown shores and caught glimpses of, what? "Truly eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man: what God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Without fear or pain or weariness, we went where we willed to go. Truly this world of ours is a beautiful world. I understand how Divine Beings might sing for joy over it and pronounce it "very good." We explored its heights and depths, its seas, caverns and mountain fastnesses, its deserts and its fertile lands. God's handiwork was perfect, man alone has made it bad.

O those wondrous days of inspiration, revelation and achievement, broken by a mighty Call, which echoed and re-echoed thru every realm of being; a Call to self-forgetfulness and loving service; and all who had ears to hear that Call, responded to it, and from peace beyond human understanding, and from joy unspeakable, we descended into the darkness and sorrow, into the flames and smoke and deadly gases, into the horror and agony and man's inhumanity to man, we came, and where the Comrade in White led, we followed, and in His Name, we gave of ourselves to the uttermost; and amid the awful din and roar of battle, we sometimes paused to catch again the angel's song telling of our Father's changeless Love.

O wondrous Love! Almighty Power!
Unfailing Light in darkest hour,
That pierces thru earth's deepest gloom,
And lifts the shadows from the tomb!


Sin-shackled souls thou dost set free,
And tear-dimmed eyes thru rainbows see;
And hardened souls, grown black with sin,
When washed by Love are pure within.

Upon earth's horror-haunted shore,
Amid the awful battle's roar,
Thou didst stretch forth a mighty hand,
White-robed and unafraid didst stand!

All-conquering Love! Thy banners wave
Above the victor's unsealed grave!
And far above time's angry roar
Thy Voice is heard forever more!

CHAPTER VI

MY SEARCH FOR TRUTH

O TWO individuals have the same experiences in earth life, and no two have the same here. I cannot imagine any place where any two individuals *can* have exactly the same experience and maintain their individuality.

As you have to forego personal desires and pleasures, in order to write this communication for me, so I must also sacrifice self to give it to you. Naturally we both want something worth while. What is best worth while? A mighty question, and one that no two persons would answer exactly alike.

So many times, both over here and over there, I have listened to inspirational speakers, and felt my very soul burning with the fire of zeal—an intense desire—for the speaker to awaken from a semi-conscious condition, into one of vivid realization of the vital needs of the hour; and an ability to grapple with them in a clear, concise, discriminating manner.

Moonbeams, dewdrops, sunbeams, starry-eyes, are all right in their places, at the proper times, but in time of peril, with Lowell we cry, "*God, give us men!*" Fire us with wisdom, endow us with strength, fill us with the love that knows no defeat, and send us forth to service, that service which enables us to forget self in the good of the whole. So shall the powers of Darkness flee, and the powers of Light rise, all victorious forever more.

It is time that the false ideas regarding after-death conditions were dispelled. There would have been no

hope for the world if all mankind had accepted the one-time church teaching, that man *had* to drag wearily thru the earthly vale of groans and tears, in order to attain to a state of bliss unthinkable, in some far away state of nothingness, where one *might* find rest the most wearisome task imaginable.

Set this down as Truth—rest can only be attained thru a change of mind, which, except in rare cases, should be accompanied by physical activity, in harmony with the mental activity.

The modern cults, which have condemned their Church brothers for their foolishness, have, in their teachings, done little better, for they have turned the spirit world and its inhabitants into a sort of vaporous dreamland, where ecstasy and horrors vie with each other for supremacy. For Truth's sake, sister, teach the people that spirits have bodies as tangible to *their* plane of matter as your body is tangible to *your* plane of matter. Strange, is it not, that a sensible person cannot understand that refined senses are as conscious of refined matter, as crude senses can be of crude matter?

All unprejudiced thinkers teach that heaven and hell are *mental* conditions, which affect one's environment to a large degree; but do not stop there, teach that no person can jump from a hell-condition into a permanent heaven-condition, and God's Law is growth, progress; teach that Law can be, and often is, violated but never broken.

Desire, impulse, hope, ambition, aims, purposes, can all be changed in a moment, "in the twinkling of an eye"—but whoever thinks *that is all there is of it*, is doomed to sorrow and disappointment. Salvation has to be *worked* out by one's own self, and all the teachers and Saviours that ever lived, cannot save a mentally self-satisfied or lazy person. Our Saviours point the Way, they show us *how* to work out our salvation, and having done that, they can only love us and *let* us do it.

Only unsatisfied desire can make the animal nature active; that desire satisfied, temporarily, indolence at once manifests. The intellectual nature is always active; it makes easy ways hard, and gathers heavy burdens, multiplies cares, and is always urging and demanding, constructing and destroying. The spiritual nature is always active, but in its activity, passive; it makes the hard ways easy, and the heavy burdens light, and constructs the indestructible only.

When you look into water, every object you see is reversed, and when you look thru fog, the objects are distorted, or lacking in detail. Water is a good illustration of the intellectual mind. It is only in the unobstructed sunlight that one can see accurately, but you must yourself go *into* the sunlight, and if you go with a settled purpose to see everything as it really is, even if all your cherished theories dissolve like mist before your vision, then, *well* for you.

I have hesitated to comply with your request for personal experience, and yet, if your *will* to learn the truth is strong enough, you will gather much from my experience to help you along the way.

After my so-called death, I opened my eyes and found myself lying upon a white cot, in a room that suggested a hospital ward, only it was very beautiful, and there was no odor of chemicals. White-robed women with kind, sympathetic, motherly faces moved here and there, tenderly watching their charges. Birds were flying about the room, singing joyously. I heard the sound of water murmuring drowsily, and music wondrously sweet, like the notes of an aeolian harp. I became conscious of feeling strong, well, buoyant. My mind was keen, alert and free, and thinking required no effort; there was no haziness to be overcome, no heavy weight to be thrown aside.

I looked up into my mother's face, but I felt no surprise. My mother explained to me what had occurred,

and told me that as I had not furnished myself with any special kind of clothing, she had obtained for me an ordinary business suit, which I might wear at my pleasure. She also told me, that as I had learned to do very well without her assistance while I was upon the physical plane, I could do equally well without her, then and there, and so she would leave me for a time, and go about her usual duties.

I now see the wisdom of my mother's act. *Those who represent Love as blind, are lost in the mazes of sex consciousness. Real Love is real Wisdom.* You may have been told that many times, but it is a very lame statement of the Truth, that will not bear repeating, and a person of very poor comprehension that objects to its re-statement.

My mother's parting words were: "Remember, my son, that there is a God and Father of all, a real, loving Presence, ever ready to aid and help, whenever you *seek* Him, and whatever else you do, seek to *know* this One True God."

As I lay pondering deeply upon my mother's words, I saw a loved brother bending over me. He checked my eagerness to talk about personal affairs by saying: "We will not waste words, my brother, for all that pertains to the personality will and must adjust itself in harmony with the Law controlling it; let us devote our time to the eternal things which abide forever. Personal affairs are only *seemingly* real, for they are constantly changing in appearance like our emotions, scarcely permanent for an hour. Remember, my dear brother, that the same Law that controls upon the lowest plane controls upon the highest; the Principle involved is always the same. All Truth is One Truth, and no circumstance, language, desire or belief, can change it. Listen to a few statements of Truth: "Seek and you shall find"—either what you seek for, or something of *like nature* which, *having made your own, you must contact first.* As you give, you will and must receive. According to the *nature*

of the *outflow*, will be the *nature* of the *inflow*. Ponder well upon these words, for in them alone lies the issue of all that is before you. All the beauty that God and man have woven into manifestation, means very little to the blind man, and the eyes of the soul must be opened before it can perceive Truth. Thru suffering, the soul is led to the Fountain of Truth, where the blind receive their sight"

I will not weary you with endless details. As time flew by, I grew more and more perplexed, and the more perplexed I became, the more I kept myself *to* myself. I thought to meet many friends, and saw very few. After a time it was forced upon my consciousness that many people who were once so eager to claim my attention had a personal motive underlying their eagerness. After thinking deeply about the matter, I made up my mind that I could not condemn them without condemning myself.

I visited all the modern-cult churches, but I found nothing to satisfy my soul hunger. I attended the meetings of many so-called Free Thought and Liberal Associations, but to me they seemed iconoclastic, and aggressively destructive. However, it was in one of these meetings that I perceived the truth, that it is criminal to destroy, unless you can furnish something at least a *little* better than that which you have destroyed.

Many of those who cry persistently, "Believe nothing," are the ones that believe the most, for in every denial lies an affirmation of Truth.

I noticed that while I was in the so-called orthodox Churches, I had a sense of restfulness and substantiality, that I did not have elsewhere. This fact surprised me, until it occurred to me that the explanation lay, probably, in the fact that the people gathered there were settled in an old and well established line of thought. So I kept on making the rounds, growing ever more and more weary of myself, and tired of seeking, and trying to think it all out.

One day I made the acquaintance of a man I will call Smith, who proved a great help to me in an indirect way. He belonged to that class that tells everybody what not to do. One day, while we were out seeking for some new occult teaching, we heard a man shouting, "Keep away from them, they are hypnotists! hypocrites! fakirs! liars!" "What is the man talking about?" I inquired of a listener.

"Of the workers at the Rescue Mission," he replied. "They are healing the sick and wounded, teaching and comforting the hopeless and broken-hearted, uniting in the bonds of love, members of family and friends long separated by wrong thinking, and the speaker does not like the *names* they are using while doing the work."

"What is *he* doing?" I asked.

"Nothing, and that is why he has so much time and energy to denounce those who are doing something," was the reply.

The man's words stirred me all thru and intensified my hunger for Truth, and I hurried on. Smith caught me by the arm, "Look at that!" he ejaculated. I looked and saw two priests helping two men wild with grief and anguish, into an open church, where they tenderly ministered unto them.

"The hypocrites!" snarled Smith, but I turned on him with, "Now, look here, Smith, during all the time I have known you, I have never seen you give a bit of real help to any one; I have never heard you speak a helpful, encouraging, comforting word to any one; in view of this fact, what right have you to condemn these priests? These black-gowned men have evidently got *something* worth while. What is it? You do not know, I am going to."

A look of horror passed over Smith's face. "You do not mean to tell me you would go into a Catholic Church?"

"Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Mohammedan, Buddhist,

it matters not to me, if they have the Truth I seek. I have always accepted, and stood by, everything that appealed to me to be for the best good of Humanity, and I am not going to turn sneak and coward now," I said sternly.

"I see you are not of my class, good-bye," said Smith curtly, and so we parted.

The moonlight shone upon the tall, picturesque palms, and white-blossomed orange trees, and the roses and lillies beckoned to me, they were perfectly tranquil. Had they found the truth that is freedom? Can anything be more enticing than Nature by moonlight?

The words my mother and brother spoke to me, it seemed so long ago, rose up and took possession of me. "Prejudice, opinions, beliefs, supposed facts—all, and everything that hinders, I gather up right here and now and throw to the winds," I said, "naked I enter this garden, and here I stay, until the Truth I seek comes to me."

Peace such as I had never known before took possession of me. I went to a secluded nook and lay quietly down.

Then the Vision came to me. The earth was wrapped in blackness, and no object was wholly discernible to my sight. Phantom-like, grotesque objects flitted before me, and vanished. Suddenly a Light appeared, as a huge white cross appeared upon a mountain before me. It radiated a dazzling Light in which I saw every object sharply revealed. The phantoms vanished, there was nothing ugly nor distorted in all that beautiful Light.

I saw that many men and women sought the Light for a brief moment, but as one ray of the Light was absorbed by them, they turned with altered faces and went out to radiate the one ray among their fellow beings, who, it seemed, could not bear any greater Light than the one ray afforded; and the people that followed each one-ray Light teacher, thought they had the whole Light, and fought with all who differed from them. I saw there

was now and then a man who stood longer in the Light than the others, and these radiated such a brilliancy that many people seemed unable to bear it, and they turned and tried to stop the illumined ones from teaching, in many cases trying to kill them.

I quickly observed that whoever absorbed this Light, became changed in appearance, and wherever the Light fell, beauty arose from ugliness, and harmony manifested.

As I pondered upon the meaning of all this, I saw another man, a very ordinary looking man, appear in the full blaze of the Light, and as he stayed longer in the Light than the others, he carried away more than the others. I also made the discovery that whoever absorbed this Light, became themselves illumined, and wherever they went, sad faces grew bright, and the weak became strong, and the ugly grew beautiful, and harmony came out of discord.

I noticed that when the head alone of a person was illumined, he did not radiate the amount of Light those did whose hearts also were illumined. I observed and pondered.

From the depths of my being I cried out for the Light to touch me. I heard my name called and, looking up, beheld my long idealized mother standing beside me, in all her angelic beauty. Then to my consciousness, the heavens opened up and a host of shining ones appeared and sang; and the birds and flowers and the fountains of running water, took up the song, the chorus of which was, "God is Love, God is Love."

Then my mother said, "My son, that cross represents the One Supreme Power, Dual in its aspects of Love and Wisdom, which united, is Truth—the One Light. Whoever radiates this Light, is manifesting Divinity. The more Light he has, the more Divine is his character, and the more of Divine Love and Wisdom he will manifest in his daily life. You have seen the world's Teach-

ers standing in this Light, and the One who stood there the longest, radiated the most Light."

The summing up of all Truth in all religions and philosophies is: Let your soul become so full of Divine Love and Wisdom, that all that is in opposition to it will be swept away from you, then, within you Truth will be generated as rapidly as you need it and *use* it. If you use a power, it increases rapidly, but if you do not use it, you lose it. To teach the Law of spirit communion, the Law of cause and effect, the Law of vibration, of rhythm, correspondence, etc., is necessary to the evolution of the race, but the fulfillment of *every* Law is Love, and against Its manifestations there is no law of God or man.

"O Infinite Love," I cried, "fill me, even me, so full of Thyself that I may go out into all the world as a Light-bearer—a truth-giver!" Then a Voice, like the music of the spheres, like the melody of countless realms of angelic beings, like the voice of the sunlight, the voice of the falling dewdrops, the voice of the Soul of Things ever speaking in the silence, replied:

"Thy prayer, O aspiring one, is answered, Go!" and the Vision faded.

J. R. F.

CHAPTER VII

THE REALMS OF DARKNESS



HERE are many people who believe in re-incarnation, because it appeals to their vanity, feeds their self-love, and is an endless source of entertainment.

Re-incarnation is, to the *believers*, what Salvation is to the *believing* Church-member—easy and comforting; but, if a person has a real *knowledge* of Salvation or of re-incarnation, he has a deep conviction of a Truth that clears his vision and lifts him ever higher and higher above the darkness and miasma of selfishness. He has a stronger grip upon eternal things, and a broader and ever increasing understanding of life as it really is.

My work, since leaving my body, has been confined entirely to the realms of darkness, and after all these years, I think I ought to be able to give you something worth while.

Truly it is written that Truth is simple. The so-called enlightenment which the world boasts of, has made life very complex, and greatly increased its burdens. The lauded inventions of this time, which are to do away with hard manual labor, have simply shifted the heavy burdens of every-day life, from the physical to the mental plane, but have not lessened them.

The awful carnage of the past few years could *never* have been, but for modern inventions which enabled the cunning ones to turn their plowshares into swords, and their pruning hooks into spears.

The problem of how to feed, clothe, and house one's

self is ever growing more complex and perplexing. Man accumulates quantities of things which he has no real use for, and which, sooner or later, he finds burdensome. He houses himself extravagantly to make room for his "things," and drops from the weariness of it all. He eats complicated and unnatural food, and sickens and ages as the result.

The machinery of Evolution is running in high gear at the present time, and those whose temperature registers normal, are the exceptions to the rule.

As it is on the physical plane, so it is on the mental. Mankind, who has ever sought for an *easy* way to save *himself*, thru some highly complicated method, best known to himself—is still treading the same path with different colored glasses on.

He wants Truth, but he wants it highly seasoned—so complicated that he cannot taste the original flavor. He wants something "occult," weird, spectacular—something that will give him thrills, and delude him into the belief that he is the favorite of some highly illumined "inner circle" of super-human beings; or, he wants something so abstruse, that the fact that *he* can comprehend it, testifies to his mental superiority; or, still another class demand only that which is to the outer senses beautiful, beguiling, witching, sensuous—soft as the lullaby song which the mother uses to lull her babe to sleep; the song of the purely selfish, who seek to "demonstrate" for self and cares not for others, so long as their own dream of bliss remains unbroken.

People from the classes I have mentioned are utterly worthless to us as helpers—as worthless as the hypocritical religionist, or those who say, "Lord, Lord," while their hearts are far from Him.

A very important thing to know, is what class of people we find in the Realm of Darkness. The *purely selfish*, irrespective of nationality, class or religion.

It is individual development that counts, and one's individual development depends entirely upon his consciousness of Truth, and his ability to put it into expression.

The more absorbed in lower self-interest one is, the dimmer and more distorted is his vision of Truth.

Only two classes of people are of real worth as workers in the darkness of sin: the spiritual soul that has become Christ-centered, and therefore has lost self—that is, personality—in the Divine Image, and the reclaimed sinner who *knows how* he was reclaimed, and longs to have every other sinner share his new-found blessedness.

In the Realms of Darkness, we find not only religious hypocrites, but political, and big-business hypocrites. A liar is one who intends and tries to deceive—and the world today, is thickly populated with them. They may deceive themselves, and some of the time, others—but they cannot deceive God or spiritualized beings.

All the Hells I have been in, with one exception, are largely populated by "respectable" people! Here we find people who heaped together earthly treasures, gold and silver, and many houses and much land; those who wrested from Mother Earth the treasures, the necessary things of life, which a loving Father intended for all His children, but which they, in their selfish greed have withheld, regardless of the suffering which inevitably follows.

Here also are those who have sought for fame, regardless of the blighted lives and ruined souls that have marked their career. Here are the intellectually proud, who have selfishly devoted time and strength to the attainment of knowledge (†) that they never intend to make any good use of. Also those who use their intellects to mislead, or merely to amuse others, with no higher purpose in view.

Selfishness is very insidious, and the more selfish a person is, the blinder he is to his own imperfections. We

see a child walk up to another and snatch his apple away from him, and we say, "what a selfish boy," but if the same boy had cunningly schemed or devised a plan whereby he could have obtained the apple—would the onlookers have been shocked at the selfishness? Or, would they have applauded the brilliancy of the mind that devised the plan? He that digs a pit, shall himself fall into one, somewhere, sometime.

There is another Hell! Yes—there we find the class that the *world has branded criminal*. Here Fear assumes gigantic proportions, and stalks through the darkness with menacing hands uplifted; here, shadows lurk, and *what* is behind them? Here, your nightmares seemingly become real at last.

Sin-sick, sin-weary, sin-worn, like naughty children easily frightened, they bewail that which they once had and through their own misconduct, have lost—their liberty and opportunities to be good and happy. They have sold their birthright, for what? For a few hours of animal gratification? Such a fearful price to pay! But these people are much more readily reached than the others, if you go in the right way, and with the Spirit of Divine Love radiating from you.

These people will listen eagerly to the "Old, old Story, of Jesus and His Love," and join brokenly in singing that hymn. Here they have One Who never turned a sinner away, but Whose tender hand touched the fevered brow, the leprous body, and palsied limbs, but to heal and bless. He was one who was human enough to know, understand, and sympathize—and Divine enough to love the sinner—mighty enough to save.

It is so easy to teach them of the human Jesus, Who trod the long, hard way from sin to righteousness—from grief to joy—from weakness to strength; and of Christ, the Son of God, all-powerful to save, to wash away with all-cleansing Love, every trace of sin and shame.

It is so easy to teach them just *where* they are upon the pathway, and *why* they are there, and what all their hard, bitter experiences may do for them and others.

Like tired children, lost, and far from home, they will cling to you sobbingly, desperately, provided you tell *the Story*, and they see that you *also* know whereof you speak.

But go not with dogmas, creeds, theories—go not with high-sounding phrases and doctrines; go not with soft, jeweled hands uplifted in warning; go not in costly apparel and robe of self-righteousness, go not with the “I am God and the Christ-in-you theories; go not in any of those ways, lest they turn and rend you.

If your hands are worn with toil and your face marked with traces of past hardships and sufferings, all the better—you *know*; go in His Name and filled with His Love, and that Love will win, and the darkness of that Hell will be changed to light, and its groans of anguish, to songs of joy and gratitude; yes, it will, to its remotest bounds, echo with the songs of the redeemed.—H. H.

CHAPTER VIII

MY VISION—(A SYMBOLIC VISION)

I STOOD upon a plain, one among many others. Back of us was a mountain whose snowy summit gleamed in the dazzling rays of the sun, before us rose another mountain, whose summit was unseen by those who stood at the base. Up the rugged sides of the mountain, ran many narrow pathways, strangely interwoven. Suddenly, among us appeared a stranger of majestic bearing, clad in a flowing robe. His keen, dark eyes searched the multitude around him for a moment, then in a commanding voice, and with hand outstretched toward the mountain before us, he said, "Upon yonder mountain lies wealth untold; whoever gains its summit, before the last ray of the setting sun shall fade from the snowy pinnacle of the mountain back of you, shall receive the treasure."

He vanished from our sight, and then began a wild scramble for the mountain sides. Men and women in the prime of life, men and women aged, bent and gray, young men and maidens struggled and scrambled for the mountain paths.

Impelled by an irresistible impulse, I moved forward with the rest. Pictures of the good I might accomplish, if wealth were mine, danced before my vision, and I scarce knew how I made my way along.

I had not gone far, when I saw an aged woman whose clothing had become entangled in a thorn bush; I stopped, and with some difficulty extricated her. She was very grateful and with childlike confidence, tucked her hand under my arm and said simply, "I will go

the rest of the way with you, I am not seeking this wealth for myself, but to help others in great need."

Soon I heard the sound of labored breathing, and glancing down, saw a spaniel with a puppy in her mouth. True to the master who had heedlessly deserted her, and true to her offspring that she would not leave behind, the poor creature was nearly spent with her efforts, and her soft brown eyes looked pleadingly into mine.

I gathered up the kitchen apron I wore and taking the little creature from its mother's mouth, I stowed it safely away. The grateful dog licked my hands and walked quietly by my side.

Following the steep pathway around a jutting cliff, we found an aged man, who had fallen in some entangling vines and was unable to rise. I found his cane and helped him upon his feet, and with many expressions of gratitude, he said, "I, too, will go with you the rest of the way."

We had not journeyed far, when a large, strong man went rushing past us, rolling a huge boulder in our pathway, which, in his mad rush he had dislodged. Pointing to the distant mountain, he said to me, "Look at the sun! You foolish woman, what are you bothering with those old people for? Look out for yourself and let everybody else do the same." "God never permits us to gain anything by being unkind to others," I called after him as he disappeared.

We had not proceeded far, before we heard the sound of weeping and groaning, as of one in great pain. Investigation proved that the man who had so recently passed us, had in some way, dislodged a fallen tree, the trunk of which had fallen across him, pinning him helplessly to the ground. With patient persistence, our united efforts succeeded in extricating him. His face flushed very red as he saw me, for he must have recalled the advice he so recently had given me, however he made no effort to outdistance us.

Very slowly it seemed to us, we made our way steadily up the precipitous pathway. Our many companions had long ago chosen easier and more shaded pathways, but somehow I knew they all led into one pathway at the summit, which we now and then caught a passing glimpse of.

Several times my companions called my attention to a strange dark object, which seemed to block our way near the mountain top, and they anxiously discussed the matter, but when they appealed to me, I said simply, "We are never required to do an impossible thing, and if we do our part well all the way, God will attend to the rest."

Thus comforted, we journeyed on until our attention was arrested by the wailing of an infant. I glanced at the sunlight, dangerously nearing the mountain peak, but without a moment's hesitation, I plunged into the bushes that fringed a precipice and when I emerged, I carried upon my breast a sobbing and helpless infant, which some one had abandoned.

We sprang forward eagerly, for we were near our journey's end, and were soon to be confronted by that strange something which appeared sometimes dark and menacing, sometimes bright and inviting.

I glanced at the distant mountain and saw there was not a moment to lose. At this instant, there fell upon our ears, that most pathetic of all sounds, the bleating of a lost lamb at eventide.

For an instant I hesitated, then sprang from the pathway into the thicket of stunted bushes. When I returned with the lamb, I found I was ahead of my companions. I glanced back at the mountain; the sinking sun bathed its snowy crags in a flood of rosy light, and rested in a glittering crown upon its topmost peak. I glanced ahead, and upon the mountain summit I had so nearly gained, shot a ray of dazzling light. Lo! the sunset of the old day, was the sunrise of the new!

Then something happened—I scarcely knew what or how: the aged couple I had journeyed with, were transformed into angels of light, and the lamb and the infant I clasped to my breast, suddenly floated before me, radiant cherubs.

I heard the sound of once familiar footsteps, no more weak and feeble, but vibrant with joyous life; and voices, that the world tells me are forever hushed in death, fell upon my ears. With outstretched arms I waited—eager, expectant—I am still waiting in perfect faith.—I. L. B.

CHAPTER IX

THE DREAM THAT IS NOT ALL A DREAM

I DREAMED it was twilight, and I was climbing a steep hill. It was a narrow pathway and full of obstacles. I was heavily laden and kept constantly stumbling, now and then I dropped a bundle, but for some reason did not stop to regain it. By my side walked—a Specter.

The fourth time I fell sprawling among the stones, I exclaimed angrily, "What is that thing I tumbled over?"

"The books you, yourself have written," said the Specter calmly, "what did you write them for?"

Startled into perfect honesty, I replied, "For money, of course." "Well you got it," said the Specter, "what are you grumbling about?"

After a pause I said, "The money does not seem to be doing me any good right now." "No, and it is not likely to, you should have thot of that before."

I glared at the Specter, but he never winced, it was evident I was dealing with a genuine Specter—one that insisted upon speaking the truth, regardless of the conventionalities of polite society. At last I paused in my headlong pace, I was exhausted, I could go no farther. "Sit down here," said the obliging Specter, and without a glance about me, I obeyed him. As soon as I got my breath, I looked about me, and to my horror, saw that I was seated upon a narrow board over a dark and fearfully suggestive chasm.

I looked wildly for some place to leap to, but nothing

substantial appeared. "Better keep quiet," said the Specter grimly, "you are situated badly enough now," and I agreed with him.

Soon a throng of people came in sight. The first one that paused, was a middle aged man; he was well-fed, well-dressed, and his pockets looked suggestively bulgy. "Beautiful day we have had," he said pleasantly, "gorgeous sunset, hope you did not miss it. Lovely pathway this, many fine geological specimens all about, magnificent views all along the way. That chasm underneath you is a botanical treat. I never saw such luxurious ferns before," and with a cheerful nod, he passed on.

Young people were constantly rushing by, but they seemed to have but one idea: to gain the top of the mountain, and they never noticed me at all.

The next that paused was an elderly man wearing spectacles and a gray suit. He carried a note-book under his arm, and seemed searching for something, when his eyes fell on me. He paused, and exclaimed, "Well, well! At last I have found a real psychological problem. My good man, will you kindly tell me by what chain of circumstances you were ever led into the position you now occupy?"

"Yes," said a second man, joining the first, "do tell us the cause which produced this most unusual effect. I must make a note of it and bring it before my class tonight."

Here they began a discussion regarding the probable width and depth of the chasm beneath me, and so passed out of my sight.

The next one who stopped, was a middle aged woman, strong and portly, and she kept consulting a very familiar looking book. She gazed at me critically and then said, "Glorious evening sir, you ought to be very thankful you have such a beautiful spot to rest in, not that you need rest, for you are perfectly well and strong, and spirit never grows weary."

"Perhaps Madam," I replied rather tartly I fear, "If *you* had sat upon this narrow board until your limbs were as numb as mine are," she stopped me with a queenly gesture, and a look of well studied indifference came to her self-satisfied countenance, as she said, "My dear sir, you are under a delusion, you are bound by error, by wrong thinking. God never made a pain nor afflicted anyone by any inconveniences whatever. I have been in truth many years, and I know all about it." She passed on. I glanced at the Specter who was sitting close beside me, but he was looking the other way.

My next caller was a long visaged, long haired, long whiskered man who looked as if he had never laughed in his life. He looked at me disapprovingly and said, "There is stormy weather coming sir, a long, cold rain is due about this time—when my rheumatism gets bad, it is a sure sign. You better get in under cover, they have terrible floods in these mountains, and they come suddenly. Don't delay or you may be too late."

"If you will please tell me how I am going to get under cover, or anywhere else, I will be grateful to you," I said. He took from his pocket a paper covered book, and held it toward me. It was entitled, "The Mysteries of Revelation Explained," by the Rev. Doolittle Talk-much.

The Specter grinned exasperatingly and I wanted to punch him, but did not dare attempt it. At last he spoke, "Did *you* ever write anything that could help one out of trouble?" I turned him a cold shoulder, I had one to turn. Just then our strained relations were relieved by an elderly woman, who was leading a boy by the hand. She paused and looked at me pleasantly, opened the bag she was carrying, and took from it a wool muffler, which she wrapped around the boy, explaining as she did so, that "he was just up from the measles."

She then asked me if I could give her any reliable instructions regarding the road and country. When I

informed her that several thousand volumes had been written upon the subject, she said she was told that no two writers agreed, and would I tell her which one was correct.

I was obliged to confess that I was a stranger and had given the matter little thought, until compelled to. "If I can ever get out of my present predicament," I began, when she exclaimed, "Oh! you poor dear man! What a dreadful fix you are in. Why don't you get off that perch? You will get numb with cold, and rheumatism will set in, and then where will you be?" *That* was the question I wanted answered, but got no chance to say so, for she went on, "You look kinder sick and speckled, you are sure you haven't got the measles? Here take this shawl and put it around you—and this bag of cookies too. I am so sorry for you! How did you ever get into such a scrape? You must have been very reckless."

At this moment a sharp visaged, angular woman appeared on the scene. "Melvina Peters!" she exclaimed sharply, "if I am not ashamed of you—my own sister—talking with a strange man, and in the night too. Come away at once, he is a wicked man, any one can see that." The Specter gave a little cough, but I did not glance at him.

Next came several middle aged women, and with them were a few white haired, rather benevolent looking men. I was getting desperate. Every moment my situation seemed more and more unendurable. I called to the most kindly looking man of all and he came at once and sympathized with me deeply. "If I were only free to do as I like," he said sadly, "but I am bound hand and foot and do not know how to free myself."

"Come along, Father, come along," said a dark-eyed woman, catching him by the arm, "Don't waste time and strength that you need for more important things, the man must work out his own salvation."

"The trouble with you is," said another woman, "you are thinking the wrong thoughts. Stop thinking thoughts of danger and it will cease to manifest in your life. Help can come to you from nowhere except within yourself. Oh! If you would only come to the hall on the corner of Main and X streets, and hear our new speaker explain the power of thought, you would soon know how to free yourself from this seeming danger."

"Yes," exclaimed an enthusiastic voice near the first speaker, "it is all in knowing just how. *Do* come and hear Mr. Cloud Flier, he is perfectly lovely."

I thought I heard an ominous crack beneath me and I shivered. I did not know what fate awaited me, if I went into that chasm, but I began to question whether or not, it might bring relief to try it. I turned to the Specter and said, "It was you, sir, that got me into this plight, before morning I shall be a dead man."

"You are a dead man now," he replied calmly, "can a dead man die?" I was not prepared to solve any unnecessary problems, so I turned my attention to the next bunch of people.

"Look at that man, will you!" exclaimed the foremost, "What dreadful Karma he must have made for himself. What are you going to do, George?" The man she addressed was pulling a rope out of his coat pocket and said nothing. "For goodness sake, George, don't meddle with the working of the Law. He *has* to work this Karma out for himself. If you help him out, it will in some way come back to him again."

"Not if I know it," I said under my breath. "Truth at last," whispered the Specter, but whether he referred to my words or the woman's remarks, was not clear to me.

"You are worrying, that is plainly seen," said a blue-eyed miss, "your face shows it, and you will never find

anything any better, until you stop this worrying. Look up into the calm, still sky above you, and watch the stars moving on serenely in their orbits and, knowing that the same Law that holds them in their places, is guiding you, let the Peace of the Infinite fill your soul."

Another crack—louder than any before. I was silent. How can one who hears the crack of doom, think of anything to say?

"You poor man," said a pathetic voice, "I trust you have made your peace with God. He is a vengeful God you know, but I hope it is well with your soul. You do not look very resigned, but I trust you are."

"He does not look like a bad man," said a second speaker, "are you a bad man, sir? If you would only confess it would help you greatly."

"Better tell the truth now," whispered the Specter, and I said slowly, "I am not very bad, probably because I never wanted to be; and I am not very good, probably for the same reason. I rather guess, Madam, that whether I am good or bad, depends largely upon the standard I am to be judged by."

"You talk like a sinner," said the woman, "but the Lord can save you."

"He will *have* to," I said, "for it is very evident that none of His children will lend a hand."

"Come on, Sarah Jane, come on," said the woman hurriedly, addressing a former speaker, then turning to me she said piously, "I hope sir, that when I reach yon beautiful sphere, I will find you there and walk with you on the streets of shining gold."

"Thank you," I said, "if I ever get out of this fix, I will know how to sympathize with the down and outer, and I will never desert anybody until I have done my level best for them. Streets of gold will be a last resort proposition."

"Now you are getting somewhere," said the Specter cheerfully. There was a long silence, then I turned to

the Specter and said, "I think it may be true that I am getting just what I deserve, but how long is this thing going to last?" "As long as you let it," was the grim reply.

The next that came along the pathway was a pale-faced, slender woman with dreamy dark eyes. She gazed at me for several moments with a far-away beseeching look, and then said earnestly, "O sir, my dear sir, my guide will not let me go any farther until I have given you a message from the Spirit World. You have a host of loved ones on the other side that are hovering over you, and oh, they bring you *so* much love. They have a beautiful home prepared for you over there, and they tell me to tell you, that it will soon be much better for you. Yes, better things are coming, and you will soon be in a better place. Yes, they tell me to tell you."

Another crack and the board quivered, or else *I* did. "You are not now under the right conditions to recognize truth when it is spoken to you," said the Specter. I was angry. "May all the truth that has been spoken to me, since I sat over this chasm, hang on the trees in flowers, after I am"—I was going to say, dead, but changed it to, "away from here."

A man and woman came leisurely along and seeing me, paused in evident amazement. "When were you born?" asked the woman, "O yes, I see. Planetary conditions are very bad for you at present. Let me see—your rising sign is—O yes, well you must expect a good many unpleasant conditions to overcome for a time, but take courage, Jupiter will soon be in the ascendant, and then your troubles will be over."

"Come along, come away, Maria," said the man, catching her by the arm. "I don't believe in wasting breath on such ignorant people. He surely has some relative who can help him out, there is no reason why strangers should be bothered—besides his sign and your sign are in exact opposition, and you know fire and water will never agree."

My head reeled, and it seemed that from the depths of the cavern beneath me, mocking voices laughed fiendishly. I glanced at the Specter, he was placidly watching the flight of a bat that had just brushed past us. I looked up—the constellations, cold and unrelenting, were wending their glittering way through fathomless space, and heeded not a speck of dust like me.

Just then there came around the great cliff, that half barred the pathway so many had passed that night, a frail looking woman. She held a large bundle within one arm and a sleeping babe in the other. Two small children were clinging to her skirts crying piteously for home and sleep. My heart was stirred by pity, and when the woman turned a tear-stained face toward me and with quivering lips said, "O sir, you have a kind fatherly face, I am sure you will help me a little way with my babies."

I forgot my danger, forgot the Specter, forgot the chasm, and best and most important of all, *forgot myself*. I leaped into the path beside the woman, as easily as a bird might have done. I fastened her bundle to my back and taking a sobbing child in each arm, we started up the hill. The tired face of the woman grew bright as we journeyed and she told me she knew she had found a friend, the moment she saw me, because of my strong resemblance to her father, who had promised to meet her in the early morning.

More and more closely to my shoulders, clung the curly heads of the tired babies sound asleep, and ever lighter grew my heart, for I was learning the joy of service; and the constellations that had seemed so cold and far away, now bent over me in loving benediction.

At last we gained a resting place and paused. "Look!" I exclaimed, "it is already growing light!" Yes, the stars in the eastern heavens were growing pale, and the snowy cap upon the great dark mountain in the west, was sparkling with a wondrous light. From somewhere amid the light came forth a white-robed man,

whom the woman greeted joyously as "Father." He took the bundle from my back, and unseen by his daughter, hurled it over the precipice; he then took from my arms the still sleeping babies and with blessings and grateful words, they passed out of my sight into the morning; for over the hill tops and forests, shot shafts of dazzling light, and in their glory all lesser lights were lost.

A myriad insects spread their rainbow-tinted wings, and from a score of feathered throats, came a burst of joyous melody, a new day had dawned. Within myself, there had awakened a new life, a life I was never before conscious of. I glanced down the pathway I had traveled, and was astounded, for all around the spot where I had passed so many hours of great peril—as I thought—every shrub and tree was white with bell-shaped flowers, exhaling a sweet fragrance upon the morning air; they had, one and all, spoken some truth.

From the peaceful valley below, came the sound of church bells; some priest is now going to early mass, I thought, I wonder if he is going, like a slave driven under the lash of church orders, or joyously, as one who gives loving service? I, myself was filled with the most unalloyed joy I had ever known—the joy of service—and in and through the performance of that service, I had found my freedom. As I listened to the deep, rich tones of the bell, rising and falling upon the sweet morning air, there stirred within me an irresistible desire to do something worth while—something of real help to those needing it.

I felt something touch my hand—it was a sunflower swayed by the morning breeze. Yes, there beside me on that rocky trail, subjected to all the vicissitudes of climate, that sturdy plant was growing, with every patient face turned toward the sun. I touched the plant caressingly, "You may not be beautiful," I said, "but you are encouraging."

Just then I thought of the Specter, and found him close beside me, silently waiting. "See here sir," I said, "I think that under an overruling Providence, you have been my best friend after all, tell me who are you?"

The Specter faced me squarely—"I am yourself," he said quietly.

"Myself! Myself!" I exclaimed, "then I must have been turned back side front, or inside out."

"It is very likely," said the Specter.—S. C.

CHAPTER X

A RAINY DAY

RAIN, rain! Yes, we have rain, of course. Is not this a duplicate earth-realm? In some places it rains nearly all the time, in other places, seldom. If one is in a rainy frame of mind, he can find the rain.

I love the music of it; the upspringing of the newly born grass blades, the swelling of the flower-buds, the patter of the drops upon the leaves and upon the roofs of humble dwellings, and the drip, drip from thence to the ground; the splash and gurgle of each tiny rain-made stream, and the notes of joy from the throats of such little creatures as enjoy it. (By the way, did you ever think that if a river made as much noise, according to the volume of water it carries, as a little, tinkling streamlet does, what the effect on humanity would be?)

Yes; it rained steadily and I was enjoying it hugely, when I heard a woman's voice singing, "Hark from the tombs a doleful sound." I could hardly believe my sense of hearing, for I had supposed that *that* hymn, if no other, was buried beyond resurrection.

I had an urge to be about my Father's business, so I followed the voice to a little cottage, in the midst of vines and shrubbery, under big, wide-spreading trees. The feeble light of a solitary candle showed a thin, sad-faced woman sitting alone in the gloom, with a brown-eyed spaniel lying at her feet.

She seemed much startled when I presented myself before her. "I am one of the Mission workers, and I

heard you singing and have come to see what I can do to help you," I said cheerily.

"There is nothing you nor anyone else can do," she said gloomily, "as the tree falls so it must lie."

"Well, I have never yet seen a fallen tree that some one could not move," I said; "tell me why you chose to sing that particular hymn, 'Hark from the tombs.'"

Her face grew still more sad as she said:

"Because my parents and grandparents used to sing it when I was a child; I am now sitting in my grandmother's rocker, and everything you see here once belonged either to her or to my mother," and she heaved a deep sigh.

She was such a pathetic little figure that I was filled with compassion, and said gently, "Sister, dear, this seems a gloomy place, do you *like* gloom?"

"Oh, no, I do not like it, but there is no help for it. You see, I had to take care of both my parents and grandparents, and I often grew tired and cross and spoke sharply to them. I even wished that poor old grandpa would die and I watched his failing strength with satisfaction."

Here she shuddered, as if seeing something, snake-like and horrible, coming to her, turned her face away and continued, "I did my duty by him so far as good care went, but I never gave him one bit of love to cheer and comfort him, not one kind word, and I was cold and indifferent to them all.

"Things seem so different to me now, and, O God! I can never be happy again!" and she began to sob.

The spaniel arose and gazed at her mistress with soft, pleading brown eyes, and with her forefeet tried to draw the toil-worn hands from the weeping eyes.

I pointed to the dog and said, "Sister, if you were to beat and starve that dog, would she not forgive you?"

"O, yes; Bess would forgive me anything," and she stroked the brown head fondly.

"Then, you are much worse than the dog, for you are treating someone very badly and without forgiveness," I said.

She looked up in amazement. "You are mistaken," she said decidedly, "there is not a soul in heaven, earth or hell, that I have not fully forgiven everything."

"There is one that you have not forgiven," I said solemnly, "and that one is yourself. Do you ever pray?"

"O, yes; I have asked God to forgive me many a time, but"—she paused, and I went on, "but you do not know whether He has or not, and no wonder! Forgive yourself right here and now, and *then* you will *know* that God has forgiven you. Prove that you have forgiven yourself by refusing to think or talk about your past mistakes and weaknesses any more. 'I will blot them out; I will remember your sins no more,' saith the Lord. Be God-like yourself, and freedom and happiness are yours, for I who *know*, am speaking to you."

For a moment we stood in silence, then she turned a joyous face to me—"I have done it! and O, I see *now*, you are an angel of light. O, thank God—*tell* me where shall I go? What shall I do?"

I led her out thru the falling rain to one of the Sub-Missions which, as we came in sight of it, was spanned by a glorious rainbow. I left her there, and the spaniel was with her. Another soul redeemed from sorrow and darkness!

One would think that any person long bound by a physical condition, when freed from it, would rejoice and make the most of freedom, but often this is not true. Human nature has many angles, and no two individuals are affected by a circumstance in exactly the same way. Many people who have been ill or crippled for a long time have to be rescued here, and, in order to rescue them, you have to teach them to stop thinking thoughts of illness. As long as one mentally hugs his ailments, he is ailing. A person may become ill, when he is not

thinking illness, but one who constantly thinks illness will not be really well.

The modern metaphysical cults have done an immense amount of good—a good very apparent here—and, while their votaries have had a tendency to become bigoted, arbitrary and lacking in compassion, they have accomplished much. There are always two sides to everything, and this is *one* side; the other is the larger side, where selfishness manipulates the forces.

One day, while I was out to meditate and enjoy the wonderful manifestations of Nature—the garment in which Deity clothes Himself *for* manifestation—I came across a woman sitting in a wheel-chair making tatting, I think.

“Why the wheel-chair, Sister?” I said cheerily.

She drew her face down a degree or two longer than it was, and it was long enough before, and in a doleful tone said, “For twenty-five long years I have had to sit in a wheel-chair. Both my feet are useless, lady. You cannot know such sorrow as this!”

“Sister,” I said, “you are under a delusion. The feet of your physical body were useless to you, but your physical body was buried several years ago. Your present feet are all right. Look at them with that idea, and you will see that they are. Push that useless chair into the bushes and come, run a race with me!”

The woman’s face was a study for a moment, and then, half angrily, she said, “What! give up my chair and all the beautiful things the ladies bring to me! the books and pictures and cards and flowers and candy! and never have any one love me or sympathize with me any more? No, I won’t do it!”

“Very well,” I said, “just as you please,” and I turned away, but that Something in me, always watching, turned me back, and I said, “Do you love music?”

Her face changed. “O, yes,” she said eagerly, “but I have heard none for a long time!”

“All right,” I said, “you shall, here we go!”

It was concert hour at the great Sub-Mission station, where I specially belong, when I wheeled the invalid in. They were singing "Home, Sweet Home," and no matter how beautiful that dear old hymn may have sounded to you, you can have no conception of the beauty our singers brought out of it. Then they sang "Suwanee River," "The Eden of Love" and "In the Christian's Home in Glory."

By this time my patient had forgotten her ailments and joined in this last hymn lustily. When it was concluded, one of the young men workers came along, all smiles and politeness, and telling her they were going into the negro quarters of Washington to do some rescue work, he pulled her hand over his arm and away they went.

The wheel-chair was not called for, and, therefore, is no more.

The greatest cure for invalidism in all the world is to get the victim thoroughly interested in something outside of self and its seeming limitations. I have seen this demonstrated over and over again. When self is once forgotten, its fetters are broken. It is better, In His Name, to make pink dresses for negro babies, than to lie and hug a hot water bottle, and tell your friends how awful is the pain.

E. L.

CHAPTER XI

TRUTH AND MY CREED

ANY people talk learnedly, even eloquently, about truth, but when they are confronted by the age-old question, "What is truth?" can give no definite answer. It is probable that ninety-nine out of a hundred answers reduced to some definite statement would read: "It is what *I* believe."

To change one's mind is in harmony with Nature's law of growth. No one can grow either mentally or spiritually without a change of mind. You know spirit communion to be a fact, but your ideas regarding it, I am sure, have so deepened and expanded that they now bear small resemblance to your first ideas of it. This is what I mean by growing thru changing your mind. No person *can* attain to any degree of understanding, or knowledge of truth, unless he is *willing* to lay aside every theory, doctrine or belief he has ever held to be true.

The genuine truth-seeker is like a drowning man. He will catch the rope thrown to him without questioning the character or nationality of the thrower. Truth is truth, if the Devil speaks it; and blessed are those that know this fact. The average person does *not* want truth unless he feels sure it will harmonize with that which he already holds *as* truth. There are a dozen people mentally lazy, where there is one physically lazy. This explains, to a large degree, why there is so much error in the world. The ideas of a few men, who centuries ago dared to think, now rule the world. These same men have kept on thinking since the world pronounced them dead, and those who blindly jog along in the same

old ruts, *their* mental wheels once cut, will hear from them again, in a way of which they now little dream. The man who now speaks truth with the greatest power is the man who once earnestly taught error.

While I was in my physical body I had no idea I was holding any error to speak of. I knew there were many passages of Scripture, the meaning of which I felt very uncertain about, and I was glad to think that some other man might know how to explain them aright; but that there could be any interpretation of spiritual truth outside the Christian church never once occurred to me; but when the truth that I was wrong, broke into my consciousness, I was filled with joy.

When Spirit speaks, each hears in his own tongue and manifests according to his own stage of development. Truth is but another name for Divine Love and Wisdom in manifestation. There usually is a wide difference between knowledge and belief. Knowledge is *soul*-knowing and belief is *head*-knowing, which more often is error than truth. Real proof of any truth is born within the individual. Whoever accepts outward proof of truth, has accepted the shadow instead of the substance, and it will prove unsatisfactory some time.

O, the joy that came to me when I *knew* that God is a loving Father to *all* His children and lets the sunshine of His love fall upon all alike! The Father's gifts are offered freely, but it depends upon the children whether they are taken or not—also upon the *use* made of them when they are taken. Perfect freedom is given the children. Love is *all*-embracing and shuts out no form of life. There is no hope, aspiration, desire, ambition or effort that love will not purify, stimulate, strengthen and transform.

It is the Father's will that every one of His children shall reflect the Divine image perfectly, but, if some of the children choose to take the Hate path instead of the Love path, they must take the sorrow and suffering that inevitably result. The Father has sent many great

Teachers to point the Way and demonstrate what Love will do, but if the children love darkness better than light, there is plenty of it for them to stay in until, weary of it, they seek the Light. It is not the Father's will that any should take the hard, roundabout way home.

Material substance is the coarse outer garment in which God clothes Himself for manifestation. The finer astral matter, which composes my present body and the world of beings and things I am now dealing with, may be likened to a finer inner garment in and thru which God manifests here. Mind substance is a still finer garment thru which God manifests upon the mental plane, and Spirit is a *still* finer substance by means of which God manifests to the spiritual.

Spirit is a direct manifestation of Deity, but is not the Manifestor. When God wills to manifest specially for the benefit of His erring children, He is compelled to assume *form*, for outside of form He cannot manifest to those bound by form.

Within the last few years, many people have been making great account of the physical body, devoting the larger part of their waking time to thinking about and caring for it. In every possible way these people have tried to deify the body and live in it long years—perhaps forever. This is the reverse swing of the pendulum from the older teaching, that the body is essentially vile and not to be considered more than absolutely necessary. One teaching is as pernicious as the other, for the truth lies, as it always does, between the two extremes.

If you are filled with the *love* of God, you will take good care of your body; for it is the instrument thru which *you* must manifest, and as *you* are clean and pure you will keep *it* clean and pure. God gives you wisdom to know *how* to care for your body, if you will only *be still* and know; but you may be very sure that the Divine Wisdom always tends to self-control and strength of character and *never* to fleshly weakness and *self* indul-

gence. Overfeeding or eating merely because a thing tastes good is a pernicious form of self-indulgence; but to let the ambitions of the personal self, or habit-mind, lead you into overworking the body is an equally pernicious form of self-indulgence.

There is no such thing as an untimely death. No person *can* leave his physical body until he has utilized all the forces he is capable of utilizing, to the accomplishment of that for which he came into expression. Have faith in God and save yourself the doubt and grief and the darkness of rebellion.

Dear writer, this is your strong thought: "Out of your old beliefs what do you now retain as Truth?" All of it. You once gave birth to a son, but the babe that was laid in your arms the first time, bore no resemblance to your son today, yet he is still your son. No matter what he may say or do, or fail to say or do, the fact that he is still your son remains. You have been conscious of the sun in the heavens for many years, but your idea of the sun is very different from your childish idea. I was growing spiritually while I was in my physical body. Those who knew me will tell you that my consciousness was an expanding one, and I grew until I could grow no more in the conditions under which I was.

So-called psychic phenomena came into my private life, and I was utterly unable to comprehend its significance; so God in His infinite mercy broke my fetters and set me free upon a plane of being where I could understand. No one who really knows what Faith is, will try to change the old translation, reading, "Faith is the *substance* of things *hoped* for, the *evidence* of things not seen." (For once the King James translation is the best.) When you really know the meaning of those words, "all power" is yours.

I believe that God, for the benefit of us, His little children, individualized into Being. Divinity involved in this solar system is one with the Absolute, and is Being beyond our comprehension. Deity involved in

this world is, as Being, beyond the comprehension of the *intellect*; but spiritual mind perceives Him, the loving Father, as Being, one with every Being and one with the Absolute. As the sun has many rays, so the Absolute pours Himself out in many states of Being.

God is life, light, power, intelligence, principle, spirit—all that and more. To us He is indeed and in truth a loving Father, and to *know* Him is to *trust* Him, and, to trust Him fully, is to have peace and joy under *all* circumstances. He withholds from us no good thing. When we get to the place where a thing is good for us, He gives it to us. Commit your way unto Him and wait *patiently* for Him and He will bring it to pass. When you get impatient and try to force results you get yourself entangled in the web of the Law, and disaster in some form overtakes you—but never blame anyone but yourself.

Yes, I believe in God—or rather, I *know* in God—but my conception of Him is very different than it was once, and whatever your conception of God may be, *have faith in Him* and you will be a victorious soul. To help us on our way God has, at various times, spoken more fully *thru* and *in*, some of His children than the other children were capable of understanding at that time.

At last He sent His Son, a special manifestation of Himself, Christ, in and thru Whom salvation comes.

Salvation from what? Everything from which man could want to be saved. I believe in Christ the Son of God, *in* you the hope of glory, illumination, salvation. I believe in Jesus of Nazareth who freely gave His life to the world and will continue to do so, until the earth and all in it becomes as perfect as God's idea of perfection.

I believe in Heaven, not a far off place, but an inner consciousness which all must some time attain. I also believe in a *literal* Heaven; for this earth must express in the outer what all her children realize within. There

may be in some far away solar system, a realm of bliss awaiting us when we are thru with this world; but we may be very sure we shall not be thru with this world until we become as perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect, and the earth and *all* there is in it has become as perfect as perfect beings shall require.

I believe in angels, guardian and ministering spirits, God's messengers expressing the Divine love within themselves. Some angels wear flesh and blood and some do not, but all have come along the one hard, thorny pathway into that Love which forgets self and its limitations.

I believe in prayer, not the sort of prayer the minister "makes" when he prays for the congregation to hear him, for that is mere words which furnish nothing to believe in, but in prayer which is the soul's intense desire, which pours itself out in supplication or the spoken word. Prayer is the urge of the real self voicing itself in language, the Spirit, knowing your needs, claiming for you your own.

Prayer has a scientific basis as well as a religious one. Prayer is the connecting link between your need and the Source of Supply. Not until Christ—Divine Love—rules supreme within you, can you know how to pray and *what* to pray for. *Let* the Spirit make intercession for you with earnest desires which cannot be expressed in words. Yes, pray! There is an omnipresent, omnipotent Power to pray to, and He hears you even before your desire finds expression in words; and, altho you may not comprehend His state of Being, He is your loving Father, pray! He heals the sick, gives food to the hungry, opens the prison doors, gives sight to the blind, supplies all your needs, and fails no one that trusts in Him.

I believe in the Word of God, which not only flashes from the pages of every bible scroll, but is thundering mightily in the world today and will continue to do so until the end of time. Yes; I believe in the Word of God which was spoken by the prophets and teachers of

old, and which is being spoken more clearly and mightily thru the mouths of consecrated men and women in the world today. Never since the world began has there been such inspiration and revelation as is manifesting today. Make yourself a fit and willing instrument and in His own way God will gladly use you, of that have no doubt.

I believe in hell; for I know it exists. It is a man-made hell; for it could not be otherwise. People in flesh and blood often live in hell a life-time, and people not in flesh and blood may do the same. The vilest hell is made by those who live only to gratify their lower nature, and the deepest, blackest hell is the loveless one.

Yes; I know there is a hell, both on your side and my side of life; but if there is any profanity any greater than to accuse God of making a hell and keeping His children in it for all eternity, I do not know what it can be. The fires of hell are burning fiercely today, because of the hatred loosed in the world. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the changeless Law, and all that take the sword to mete out vindictive punishment, shall by the same sword be slain.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead. The physical body is laid off—"goes down"—and the astral body arises. The astral body goes down and the mental body arises. The mental body goes down and the spiritual body arises—the body not made with hands, eternal in the heavens—as our brother Paul has stated—the body which man has not *made* for himself, but to which he *attains* by growing into the Christ-likeness.

I believe this present time is the Day of Judgment—or Adjustment—in which *every* man's works will be tried by fire; and whatever can be burned, will be burned. The earth will soon disclose her dead—her shams, falsehoods, injustices, vileness and corruption in high places. Ill-gotten gains, the fruit of oppression, will no longer cover the traitor and the laurel wreath no longer crown the brow which should bow in shame.

The tares shall be separated from the wheat and be burned ere the sunlight of the New Day dawns. Yes, I believe in a Day of Judgment, *here and now*.

I believe that the Great Teachers of earth are soon to return, and their disciples of old will return or are already here. God calls for men and women strong in courage, faith and love.


Who will answer to the call?

C. C.

CHAPTER XII

THE MOON AND THE BUDDHA TREE

PRELUDE

O NOT expect me to be humorous. I am not wretched enough. A man wants to be out of fix with himself and everyone else, in order to be really humorous. To train mental disquietude into the humor channel is one of life's victories.

The man who laughs, if he laughs at the right thing at the right time, is a world benefactor. The man who makes other men laugh is a greater one, sometimes.

All truth is paradoxical; it is and it is not. Each day, each individual has to choose whether he will have the is, or is not, side of it. The great secret of secrets is to get at that angle where you see both sides of it, then you *know* what you once questioned.

There are two classes of miserable men in the world; one class is humorous and the other isn't. One class wants every one that he meets, especially the women of his household (no others) to share his wretchedness with him (he is usually very proficient in bringing this to pass), and the other class tries to hide his mental unrest behind a veil of humor; in other words, he gets other people to do his laughing for him. In this way, he wins a reputation for being a jolly fellow, a reputation he has not earned, a semi-capitalistic method of getting what he has not earned, a method soon to meet its final Waterloo.

No; I am not sufficiently miserable to be funny, so you will please remove that string from my personality. I

am now posing as a habit breaker, and you will please respect my pose. I am now ready to say something.

THE MOON

There is life on the moon—lots of it—thin, crawling, stupid life (this is one side of it), changing in form and habits of growth, and adapting itself to radical outer changes, according to conditions.

This life does not manifest upon the mountain tops where prying telescopic eyes can search for it; neither is it outlined against the chalky whiteness of the mountainsides. There is all sorts of life manifesting in a dead *thing*, why should a dead world be an exception?

There are cracks in the moon, plenty of them, shallow cracks, deep cracks; and the deeper the cracks, the more crawly the forms of life existing therein. Some men are beginning to learn what life is, and what death is. Eternity is said to be long, so there is hope for all.

Man should have learned long ago, that the *ability* to sense is something separate from the *organs* of sense. There are beings all around you, and objects about you, which even your clairvoyant sight cannot see. You have not yet learned to see one-half the things your physical eyes are capable of seeing. There are worlds within worlds, and worlds outside of worlds, and man has not learned to know one of them yet. Man does not know how to see, hear, taste, smell or feel, as he might, and *must* some day. If he had spent as much time in cultivating his senses as he has in devising ways to pervert and abuse them, he would not be where he is today.

In a very old book, you are told to "gird up the loins of your mind," why do you not preach a short sermon from that text? If you preach ten minutes, they will listen to you, if longer than that, they will begin to wonder whether they left the cat inside or outside the kitchen door when they left home.

The moon shines with reflected light, hence the cracks. If it, like the sun, shone with inner, "in itself," light, there would be no cracks. Human beings are, as a whole,

like the moon; they all reflect light when they are turned toward the light, but when they are turned away from it, they are too dark to be seen.

Those that shine with inner light cannot be hidden; they are dependable, but never dependent; for they carry the light within themselves, and all can have the benefit of it; but no one can rob them of nor diminish the light; neither does turning about increase nor diminish it. Such a person has no cracks in his mentality, in which hideous, ugly creeping things can manifest.

Man, at a certain stage of growth, like the moon, to the telescopic eye, presents the craters of extinct volcanoes, extinct because the force which produced them has spent itself and no longer exists. After the fires of appetite and passion have exhausted themselves, down deep in the deepest crack which they have left, *self* still manifests in hideous, insidious, crawling forms. As there is a certain persistence manifesting in the moon-crack creatures, so in the deepest furrow of every mentality, *self-life* is rooted tenaciously. Truth alone can uproot self. When self dies, fear dies with it. With fear, also dies grief, jealousy, anxiety, greed, pride, prejudice and a host of lesser evils.

Man is unlike the moon in this respect: the moon has no power to shine with an inner light, and man has, when he kicks off his swathing bands and awakes to consciousness; but both man and moon appear broken and imperfect in form, except when in the full light of the One Light.

You have heard much about Astral, that is, starry beings; now you have heard of moony beings.

THE BUDDHA TREE

One day while walking down the street, No-Where-In-Particular, I overtook a stranger and, feeling lonely, I asked permission to keep him company. "Certainly," he said gravely. "I have been expecting you. My name is Hadan."

I was so surprised, I forgot to introduce myself.

"How long have you been in this country?" I asked.

"About fifteen years, I think."

Hadan's manner was gentle and well-bred; but, as he seemed to expect me to lead in the conversation, I persisted. "What sort of a country is it—as a whole?"

"Any sort of a country you have the mind to make it, I should say."

"Oh! I see!" I said slowly, "you must be a Christian Scientist, I think."

"There are no Christian Scientists here."

"What!" I ejaculated, "*this* cannot be Heaven!"

"That depends largely upon yourself," he said gently, "how would you like to sit for awhile under the Buddha Tree?"

Something in the stranger's words, struck me oddly. I had a dim recollection of something remote, something too foreign to be desirable. I did not wish to give offence, but I hesitated.

A peculiar look passed over Hadan's face. "You have altogether too good an opinion of yourself, I see, but you will get over it," he added encouragingly.

Just as I was wondering if our relations were becoming strained, we entered a bank of gray fog, from the center of which came the voice of a man crying hoarsely, "Who am I, for God's sake *who* am I?"

A tall, thin man, with a weak chin and mouth, and half vacant eyes, stared at us.

"Sakes alive, man!" I said, "don't you know *who* you are?" He shook his head weakly.

A bright idea struck me (I have occasionally had one), and I said, "If you do not know *who* you are, perhaps you can tell me *what* you are."

"O, yes," he said proudly, "I am the greatest psychic in all this country, the most famous medium in the world. I have eight guides, all of them famous in the world's history. I can heal every disease known, find hidden treasures, locate mines and wells of water, foretell future events, read the records of the past——"

"Hold on, sir!" I said, "just call up one of these famous guides and I will ask him to tell me *who* you are."

The man stared at me a moment, and then said haughtily (he must have been very cold, for he shivered violently), "I perceive, sir, that you are an unbeliever; therefore, you do not furnish right conditions. I am extremely sensitive to people's vibrations, so I will bid you good-day."

Hadan touched me on the shoulder. "Come away," he said, "the man will learn something worth while some day."

"Is the man crazy?" I asked.

"That depends upon your interpretation of the word crazy. He is certainly not in his *right* mind; for a right mind cultivates *itself*, develops itself to the uttermost, relies upon its own powers, shuns notoriety and prefers to do a little, well, rather than a great deal, half way. There is little credit to one who permits his faculties to be used by another, to the exclusion or dwarfing of his own."

"Do you mind telling me what your religion is?" I asked timidly.

"To treat everyone as if he were myself," was the terse reply.

At this moment we came to a steep and very rocky hill, with a foot-path winding in and out through tangled briars and Canada thistles, until it was lost to view. Upon a rock at the foot of the hill sat an elderly woman. The sun was pouring its heat full upon her, but she did not heed; her square-cut jaw was set and her thin straight lips were tightly closed. She was the personification of grim resolve. Occasionally she spoke. The words were literally hurled forth, and, listening, I heard, "There is no pain! there is no heat! there are no briars, no thistles, no rocks!"

"Pardon me, madam," I interrupted, "but if these things have *no* existence, why are you thinking about

them? Why waste time and strength in denying the existence of that which does not exist?"

The woman opened her eyes and gazed frigidly at me, "Sir, you have broken in upon my concentration," she said; "please depart." We departed.

For some time neither of us spoke; then I said, "It seems to me, that woman is trying to drive up that hill with her horse behind her cart."

"How so?" asked Hadan.

"Well, it seems to me, that instead of denying the heat, I would get out of it, or else assert my ability to overcome the unpleasantness of too much of it. If I whack my shins against a rock, instead of denying the existence of the pain and the rock, is it not far better to pass the incident as a mere trifle, too unimportant to detain me in accomplishing my journey? If, for some reason, it *should* detain me, then I would know that it was for a wise purpose and accept it thankfully."

Hadan looked at me sharply, "You would not have thought of this, if you had not met the woman," he said. "Is there any one you would specially care to meet?"

"Is there any such thing as an angel?"

"Certainly there is."

"Then I want to see one."

"Very well, you shall, by and by."

Just then I glanced at the ground and saw the leaves and branches of a tree outlined in light, instead of shadow. I looked up in amazement. "Where am I?" I asked.

Hadan smiled. "Under the Buddha Tree," he said.

S. C.

CHAPTER XIII

I FIND THE ANGELS



TIN peddler came to my home one day when I was a small boy," said Uncle Jake, "and the arrival of a tin peddler was an event. It broke the monotony of things, and gave the women folks something new to talk about. This particular day it gave me something new to cry about. I wanted a jack knife, my mother wanted a milk strainer, and there were not rags enough to go around, so to speak, and the jack knife proposition fell through.

The peddler was a lank, solemn-looking fellow, with a twinkle in one corner of one eye, and he said to me confidentially, while he was watering the horse, 'Now, look here, Bub; it don't do a mite of good to cry about anything; just save your time and strength for thinking some way out of your trouble. Troubles are like pigs; the more you feed them by thinking about them, the faster they grow; and they soon will make hogs of themselves and fill the whole trough and swaggle everything you put in it; so don't feed them. Stop thinking that kind of thoughts and they'll not bother you any more.'

" 'How are you going to see any way out of a thing when there ain't any?' said I.

" 'There never was any way ever invented yet that hasn't had two ends to it,' says he, 'and lots of stopping places along it. Now, let me tell you something worth knowing, Bub; if you want a thing real bad, go to work and make it, if possible, but if you can't make it, buy it; if you can't buy it, then know that you either don't

need it and are better off without it, or else it will come to you in some way or other, seven chances to ten. But, if you keep your head level and your eyes peeled, you will find a jack knife within a month,' and, sure enough I did, lying in the road just as plain as could be, and a three-blader, too."

Now, this story which Uncle Jake told me has been a sort of foundation plank in my philosophy all through my earth-life; and, when you leave the coarser for the finer, you take the foundation planks along with you, and they come mighty handy right here.

Perhaps you cannot see what all this has to do with angels; but I do. I never took so much stock in the sweet bye and bye business as some folks do; so, after I had waited a reasonable length of time (as it seemed to me), for Hadan to appear and escort me to Angel Town, and he did not manifest, I began to think of some way to bring my desire to pass, my own self. Some one with more knowledge of religion than of politics said: "There is no Savior in all the world but Truth."

If I had known one certain truth, I would have been saved a lot of trouble. The tin peddler's philosophy, like all other philosophies, had a weak spot in it. A philosophy is like a tin pan with a hole in it, worthless until mended. The tin peddler should have said, if you cannot make the thing you want, *learn how to make it*, if possible.

We are told that all things are possible with God; also, that God is everywhere. Allowing all this to be true, it follows naturally that each individual can make an "angel," one, only one, but one is enough!

There are always two points of view, the real and the unreal. If the tin peddler's philosophy had not been leaky, I would have missed all the experience that came between me and the knowledge I wanted. I did not know how an angel looked nor where to look for one; but I started with determination written all over me. I had seen pictures of angels all my life, and the men who

made those angels were as ignorant as myself, as after events proved.

I had never "wanted to be an angel and with the angels stand." If there was any one thing more than another that I was afraid of, it was being an angel—and no wonder—who wants to be a monstrosity anyway?

The only way to do a thing is to do it, so I began the first step. I did not take even one squint at the stars, or look to see whether the wind or the moon was in the right quarter, I just started. I had not traveled far until I came across a man sitting under a bush. He was the man who had the eight famous guides.

"Hello," said I, "have you been introduced to yourself yet?"

"Go away," he said imploringly, "for Heaven's sake don't look at me! I am a fool, too big a fool to live! a *fool*, I tell you!"

There was such a ring of anguish in the man's voice that I was stirred with pity. "O, cheer up," I said, "don't take it so much to heart; you are only one fool among countless millions of them. It is not what you *have* been, but what you are at each particular minute that will count through the ages to come; it isn't what you *believe* but what you *do* that counts anyway; get busy and help somebody to be happy, and he will not ask you any embarrassing questions, if you quit when the right time comes. Be a man *now*, no matter what you *have* been."

"All right, I will!"

What is it we read about being "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye?" I am thinking there is a whole lot in those words after all, for something in that man, and something in me, changed very suddenly.

The same Law which draws the waters from the distant mountain tops through valleys, ravines, plains and rocky beds into the wave-tossed sea, draws man into the sea of experience; the sort of experience he needs at

that particular time, draws him individually, draws him collectively.

Wandering on unheedingly, wrapped in deep thought, I suddenly heard the shouts of revelers, the maudlin laughter that, once heard, is ever after associated with drunkenness. I entered a magnificent home, and made my way to the great banqueting room, where a score or more of male and female people were engaged in debauchery. Costly pictures and statuary, rich draperies and rugs had impressed my consciousness as I entered the house, and here the lights shone upon costly glass that gleamed and glowed and sparkled; upon burnished silver and gold and diamonds and pearls, representing many a fortune. Soft white hands which never had known honest labor flashed with jewels; silken robes, representing the broken hearts and ruined lives of countless numbers, partly concealed the well rounded arms and bodies of the females gathered there.

I saw with eyes that *saw*, and I groaned in the agony of my understanding. Here were people who knew not the meaning of the words, work and responsibility, squandering tens of thousands of dollars, of which they had never earned a penny, while without, a great army of tortured mothers strove in vain to hush the wailings of their starving babes.

I rushed from the house. I went out to try and think. I had seen rich people. There was nothing new to me in wealth, as the world sees it, nor in the things wealth will buy, that is not the point; the point is, that I saw that there is no *real* wealth in wealth, absolutely none. These people, in their costly robes and jewels, costly *indeed*, were poorer than any church mice ever unchurched.

Some one has said, "Money is power," and millions of fools have believed it. Money is power only when it comes to obtaining material things, the things that perish, the things we sell our souls for, the things for which we barter all our joy and peace.

The people who have wealth *think* they have everything, until they try to buy health, love and friendship, the real and not sham, and then, we all know what happens, or, we should know.

Then there are the poor, who fondly imagine that, if they had this unearned wealth, they could have everything, and so make a bigger hell for themselves, trying to get more fuel to feed the flames that are smoldering.

Yes; I went out to try and comprehend my new revelation of old conditions, for those who earnestly desire knowledge sometimes pull down onto themselves more than they can handle at one time, and a new point of view is often tremendously upsetting.

Almost immediately, I found myself in a dimly-lighted, filthy street, with tall, dingy tenement houses on every hand. Blear-eyed male creatures, with coarse features and bloated faces, gave expression to passions more loathsome than any beast ever demonstrated; female creatures with disheveled hair and filthy, tattered garments, partially concealing their nakedness, fought together in bare and filthy rooms, where frightened children huddled in the shadows or wailed piteously from heaps of straw. I stood—for how long? and gazed around me; and again I turned and fled.

After a time, I became conscious that I was alone under the starry heavens. The sound of water rippling, gurgling, babbling along its way made heavenly melody in my tortured ears, and tall trees threw shadows deep and black across my pathway. I hurled myself upon a mossy rock and the sweet odor of ferns and wild roses came restfully to me.

Like many another mortal, I had gone out searching for angels and found devils; and like many another man I had to learn several truths. I was aroused by a light footstep, and opened my eyes to see the whole landscape flooded with moonlight; and so miserable was I that I almost envied the moon-crack creatures their thin crawly life.

I heard the sound of music, wonderful music, sweet, winning, persuasive music, which almost pulled me away from myself upward into the most perfect dream I ever dreamed, become material; such a state of consciousness as we name Heaven.

I felt a touch upon my shoulder and a sweet, clear voice said, "Please come; I need you."

I sprang to my feet and looked into the purest face I had ever seen, a face where nobility of purpose, strength and tenderness shone forth in all their beauty. A simple white gown fell in soft folds about her and her every movement suggested unconscious grace. An elderly woman, the very personification of motherliness, was with her, and a golden halo encircled her shapely head. Without a word, I followed them. We entered a magnificent church edifice; and, it is safe to say, that it was never used for a better purpose.

I could not keep from smiling when I thought how its rich-robed, self-satisfied dames, bankers, and wealth-seeking, self-seeking Sunday occupants would shriek, if they could see the present gathering.

My new friends ascended the pulpit, and the white-robed, halo-crowned Workers came in bringing their lost sheep and prodigals with them. It seemed to me, that every class of vice-gripped prodigal was represented there, and, as for the Workers, I suddenly realized that each had come up through great trials, through suffering, self-effacement and renunciation, to the place which they now occupied. I knew that Love Supreme was *the* power that gave them their strength and tenderness and wisdom.

Suddenly the murmurings of discontent, the moaning, and the weeping, ceased and dead silence reigned as a man appeared standing amidst the vast crowd. The organ began to play an old familiar air. Tremblingly, softly and sweetly fell the tones for a moment, and then the man began to sing, "There were ninety and nine, that safely lay in the shelter of the fold," and O, how

that man did sing! No language can ever describe it. The hardened hearts present melted like wax in the sunshine; they forgot their hatred and bitterness, and wept like little children.

A few tender encouraging words from my new friends followed this, and then the great singer asked them all to join with him in singing "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." Never shall I forget that scene—I shall bring the memory of it with me when I come back.

As the last notes died away, I felt someone near me, and looking up saw Hadan.

"Well?" he said inquiringly. I caught his hand, and cried, "I have found them."

"Found who?"

"The Angels, of course."

"Yes," he said slowly, "and when you get an opportunity, tell the scoffing, doubting children of earth, there is still power in the Master's Name to heal and save."

I have told it.

S. C.

CHAPTER XIV

ONE CLERGYMAN'S EXPERIENCE



ES; I think I was very much disappointed when I first found myself outside my physical body; not that I had any right to be, but, like the majority of mankind, I had hoped to *jump* from grace to glory, hoped that Death would give me wings, so to speak. I think there are very few church people that are *not* disappointed in the after-death conditions. By church people I mean church *members* as a whole; for very few of them are Christians in the *true* sense of the word. Many intensely religious people build for themselves an after-death condition, which satisfies them for a brief time; but, when they have awakened from their illusion, suffering is inevitable.

Like most of the clergy, my idea of Heaven was very narrow; and, put into plain language and freed from emotionalism, it might be summed up in this way: a place somewhere; God (no clear idea in regard to God); Jesus, perhaps an individual; Angels, *real beings* of a superior order; a beautiful city with streets of gold and gates of pearl; harps and plenty of music and singing; crowns and white robes to wear; thrones to sit upon and palm leaves to carry. This, taken literally, sounds very foolish, does it not? Taken figuratively, it is most beautiful.

If a person is foolish enough to permit himself to believe in an after-death condition so absurd as the one I have depicted, and which is universally accepted by so-called Christians, he *ought* to be greatly disappointed, as he is.

You can readily see that the greater one's love for God and Humanity, and the less his love of self, the sooner he will become adjusted to conditions and usefully occupied here.

Not until a person has learned to know himself as a being separate from his instruments, body and mind, with their habits and tendencies, will he be able to distinguish between that Holy One, Jesus and Christ, the Son of God. Fortunately one does not have to make this distinction, in order to lead a blameless life.

Jesus was born for the express purpose which He so nobly carried out. Thru ages of time, He had been fitting Himself to be that which He was, and is; and Mary, His mother, had also fitted herself to *be* His mother. Thru great experience and suffering, she had been purified.

No one can possibly understand the Bible, nor the great truths taught therein, unless he accepts re-embodiment as a truth. At any time previous to my liberation from my physical body, I would have looked upon the subject of re-embodiment as being too heathenish for a moment's consideration; and now I hold it as a *priceless* truth.

However, I can truthfully say that I was honest and sincere in my ministerial work. I did not work for material gain nor earthly honors; but for what I really believed was the one thing most desirable of all things, and the best good for all humanity. God blessed my efforts, as He does yours, and the efforts of all who are sincere,—to the best good of thousands,—that is, their greatest good at the time it came to them. Good, like everything else, is progressive. We are exhorted to grow in grace and the knowledge of God, daily; and the awakened soul will always do so.

There is only one path to Heaven, and that is the path of self-sacrifice, until that perfect Love comes, which knows not personal self nor sacrifice. Most people are so selfish, they want an easy road to Heaven; and a suc-

cession of lives in a physical body does not appeal to them. They want the things the way *they* want them, and, having attained them, as they surely will, they find trouble and sorrow come with them.

If you observe, as you may have, you will notice that those who cling to the idea of a far-away Heaven of perfect bliss, are those who have done very little worth while here. Those, who have conquered earthly things and in Spirit are victorious, are willing, if not eager, to return to earth life and play their part in perfecting a race, to perfect the world God has given them for this same purpose.

After I was freed from my physical body, I met many of those I had loved and lost and believed (without much thinking), to be in Heaven. We walked in green fields and beautiful gardens. We strolled beside rivers and lakes and thru forests, and sat upon rocks and mossy knolls, and talked of past, present and future. At my request, many of my friends gave me their experiences after the world called them dead; and no two had the same experience. When I asked, "Where am I?" they gave me no definite answer.

Summed up it was like this: I ask you where you are, and you reply, "Here."

Some of my loved ones had passed to a higher plane of expression; and I saw them only in vision, a fact which puzzled me greatly. I saw many of my flock of converts, and a few of my brethren in the ministry. The latter seemed as much at a loss to account for their present conditions as I was; and many of the former were inclined to blame me as the cause of their dissatisfaction. A few derided me and said scornfully, "You could tell us all about God and His plan of salvation from start to finish, when you were preaching; and now you know no more than we do; you cannot find the road to Heaven to save you."

This and much more of like nature I listened to; for it is amazing how many uncomfortable things an un-

comfortable person can think of! I grew very weary of it all; and, as it was my custom, I took it all to the Lord in prayer, and He heard me and delivered me. I had never once doubted that there was a Lord to hear, I had had too many wonderful experiences while in my physical body for that. Right here and now I make this statement: whoever in the sincerity of his heart and in faith believing, calls unto the Lord is always heard and answered; and it does not matter either, if his idea of the Lord is far from correct. Deliverance does not always come to us in the way we think it ought to come, but it comes in God's way, which is always the best way.

After having taken my troubles to the Lord in prayer, I went to a rock-strewn sea shore and sat down and waited expectantly for light to come to me. After a short time, I felt a touch upon my shoulder, and, looking up, saw a man clothed in a purple robe, standing beside me. The man was very fair and his face showed purity and strength; and the moment I looked into his kindly blue eyes I felt that I had found a friend.

"I have been sent to find you and take you with me to a meeting that is to be held tonight," he said pleasantly.

"All right!" I said, and without a question, sprang to my feet, eager to go.

We passed with great rapidity, fields, rivers, lakes, forests, cities and villages. At last we came to a mountain, forest-clad, and quite rocky at the summit. Here, around an immense Altar, was gathered a concourse of people numbering several hundred, all of whom were standing silent and expectant. My guide and I took our places with the rest. Soon the space back of the Altar filled with white-robed men and women; and, oh! such perfect specimens of spiritualized manhood and womanhood as they were! Many of them carried musical instruments, and a large number wore upon the forehead a glittering star, which I now know is everywhere the

badge of the wholly consecrated soul devoted to rescue or missionary work.

A tall, handsome man, with strong features and wonderful dark eyes, appeared beside the Altar as suddenly as if he had dropped from Heaven.

"We will now begin the services," he said; and he lighted a fire upon the center of the Altar.

The flames leaped upward and took the form of a great cross: a spectacle so wonderful, I was filled with awe. They then began to sing, the Teacher leading, and, as accustomed as I was to real devotional singing, I was lost in amazement and delight. The first song was "Rock of Ages." The last stanza was considerably changed; but the next hymn they sang, "Ho, Reapers of Life's Harvest," was the same as in the Gospel Hymns.

After the hymns were sung, the Teacher lighted a huge censer of incense; and, as the smoke ascended, there appeared floating thru and around it, fairy-like forms, beautiful with an etherealized beauty beyond description. Clouds of dazzling light formed over the Altar and wisps and waves of the most wonderful shades of blue and violet floated over our heads and rose in a quivering column from our midst.

Standing reverentially at the right of the Altar, the Teacher told us that our beloved Master and one of His disciples of the olden time would soon be with us. He said that twelve of the Master's faithful followers, who had never met there before, were present, and the Master, having heard their prayers, and knowing their sincerity and devotion, had requested that they come forward to the Altar. A great joy, a mighty impulse that knew neither doubt nor fear, took possession of me, and I sprang eagerly forward, as did also the eleven others, six women and five men.

Assuming the attitude of prayer, the Teacher in a rich, mellow voice, which thrilled my very being, sang:

"How long, O loving Master, wilt thou remain away?
Our longing hearts are waiting; come Thou to us we
pray!

O blessed is this moment, when brighter far than morn,
The sunlight of Thy Presence shall on Thy people
dawn."

As the last notes of the song-prayer died away, there appeared upon the stone platform back of the Altar, and in front of the musicians, in the full light of the flaming cross, two men and a woman.

Right here I want to say, that to the present I have no knowledge regarding the identity of the woman, but her sacred presence seemed to enfold us all in loving, motherly arms. I still think of her as the perfection of womanly grace and Motherhood.

Above and beyond all I had ever dreamed or imaged, was the Man among men, upon Whom every eye was turned. Not a word or accent or movement did He make that could not be classed as loving and simple. O, so tender and gentle! "The vilest sinner can indeed go to Him," I thought, for His understanding is so great, He has already comprehended the *why* of everything we have ever done, and, in that comprehension, He sees nothing to forgive; to Him there is neither good nor evil, O wonderful thought!—forgiveness belongs to a lower plane of understanding, the plane where good and evil still struggle for supremacy and ignorance still reigns."

The idea of Jesus as a terrible Judge, coming to take vengeance on His enemies, passed forever from my mind. O, how those ancient writings regarding our blessed Teacher have been mis-translated and mis-interpreted!

While standing there in the Master's Presence, it was revealed to me that Jesus and Christ are two Beings instead of One; and, in the records we have, it was sometimes Jesus that spake and sometimes Christ. No one can ever reason anything out right unless he starts right. Looking upon Him as He stood there before us, I understood the meaning of His words, "I have over-

come the world''; and also many other things He said.

The words He spake to us this memorable night were few and simple; but in their tenderness lay their power, or so it seemed to me. No one can overcome the world except thru understanding, *soul comprehension*, which enables one to speak with authority, which always carries conviction to the minds of the hearers; add to this the gentleness born of Love made perfect, and you have a Power which sweeps every obstacle before it. I was conscious, however, that His helpfulness came not so much from His words, as from His Presence, and, Sister, is this not true of all that live The Life? Do we not rely altogether too much upon *words*?

When the Master had finished speaking, He came forward and, taking each one of the waiting twelve by the hand, He gave to each a few words of loving recognition and encouragement. Never will I forget the touch of that hand! I do not wonder that in the days of old, the fever left those He touched. Lifting His hands, and looking upward, He blessed us, and then the whole gathering. Turning to His Disciple, He said, indicating the whole number: Feed my sheep." Then turning to our Teacher, He said, indicating the twelve, "Feed my lambs"—and vanished from our sight.

At the request of our Teacher and Leader we all joined in singing the hymn beginning, "We are living, we are dwelling in a grand, eventful time."

Then the Disciple came forward and spoke to us earnestly, every sentence of practical value. He told us of this Great Judgment Day, when the accumulated wrongs of ages shall come to judgment; and, Infinite Love, seated on its great white throne, will see that all is settled right. He said, that before this great day of wrath (man's wrath, not God's), is passed, every soul will have been tried by fire. He told us that the forces commonly recognized as good and evil, were now rapidly separating, and soon every person and every thing will be revealed in a True Light, a Light that

must eventually overcome the darkness and establish upon this earth, the reign of God and of His Christ; and this reign will endure as long as the world endures, or until all of God *involved* has been *evolved*.

Altho the speaker used, to a large extent, the old phraseology, he brought out of it wonderful new meanings. It is truly amazing how beautiful a thing will appear when the Light of Truth shines upon it! And, O, the joy that comes in seeing things alright!

It is safe to say, that when the speaker had finished, we needed no exhorting to stimulate us to work as we have never worked before. As soon as he had finished speaking, the Disciple and the Supreme Mother (if I am permitted to call her so), disappeared from our vision.

Our Teacher then explained to us that in order to have success in any undertaking, it is necessary that each worker follow the Law of Love. He said that any person who undertakes to do work that he does not love to do is doing himself, and all those he is associated with, an injustice.

"You must remember," he said, "that our Great Leader wants a *loving* service only; duty service, viewed from a spiritual standpoint, is not service. Love is the conquering power, and the watchword always. If you feel any lack of love toward your work, stop at once; for you are out of tune. Take to the people of earth this message wherever possible: Work in the Master's vineyard because you are so full of Love, you cannot help working, and not from any personal motive whatsoever."

Each of us then chose our special phase of the work, and I chose to go among those who were still wandering in shame and doubt and sorrow unspeakable, because I could preach to them the old religion, with modifications, as they were able to bear it.

Jesus and His Disciples *never* taught salvation thru literal blood; but salvation thru Love Divine, which

slays those animal qualities which are symbolized by blood.

Love is the only saving power, and it ever lifts the soul upward into joy and peace and power.

After the arrangements regarding our work had been made, we all joined hands, circle within circle, with our Teacher in the center, and sang together "Coronation," just as you find it in the Gospel Hymns. *M.*

CHAPTER XV

ASTRAL PLANE EXPERIENCES



ESUS told His disciples, that He would make them fishers of men; and I think, my dear Sister, that is what *you* have become; for your line is dangling in the waters of the finer realm of being, most of the time. Fortunately, you are not very particular whom you catch, so long as you get something helpful.

Every resident of the Astral world has his own experiences, which in some respects differ from every other person's experiences. That experience known as Birth is the same to each one born, and that experience known as Death is the same to each one passing through it; but, as to what happens to the one born and the one dead, immediately after those activities, that is another subject.

In regard to receiving deceptive communications, I see little danger. There is nothing in your *desires* to draw a class of liars to you; and your spiritual development will protect you. If it were not for your spiritual unfoldment, you would be constantly deceived by those in flesh and blood.

The people of your country are a nation of prevaricators and exaggerators. The average American cannot spend time to hear or see anything accurately, it takes self-discipline to do that, but he will not deliberately lie unless a lie will, in a business way, answer his purpose better than the truth.

People of an idealistic and artistic temperament, unless spiritually developed, are very likely to embellish

their statements with frills and furbelows; for they rarely ever see anything in the same light in which a prosaic, matter-of-fact person sees it. Sometimes the idealist sees things from a truer standpoint than the other; and he almost always sees it as it ought to have been.

The untruthful person has a hard time here; for he finds nothing permanent nor substantial. His friends vanish; his home dissolves; and, even the ground upon which he treads, breaks under his feet, and the verdure withers and fades.

We each find our *own* place and the conditions existing there are those we have made for ourselves, those in harmony with ourselves. Conditions here frequently change rapidly, according to the strength of the emotions. Where you go, what you find, whom you see, depends upon your rate of vibration.

If your heart is filled with the Christ Love, you are vibrating with angels; and you will be one with them. If your heart is full of hatred, you are vibrating with devils and *must* be one with them until hatred has been eliminated. If you are just average mortal, in whom good and evil struggle for supremacy, then you are elected to have many vivid experiences; for this Astral realm is the threshing floor where we learn to discriminate between the wheat and the chaff.

Among my acquaintances in earth life was Lord X who was not a bad man, except for a terrible hatred which he entertained toward Lord B, who owned an adjoining estate. The two men left their physical bodies about the same time. I met Lord X one day when I was traveling and stopped to chat with him.

While we were talking, Lord B came along, and X flew into a most terrible rage. The effect was frightful. X was immediately enveloped in a sheet of flame, from and through which zigzag flashes, if inky blackness can be designated that way, shot and quivered. B gave one startled look at his enemy and fled.

X went down, down in a lurid glare and his anger turned to terror and, when he began to call on God to save him from—he knew not what, the atmosphere around him began to change to an ashen gray. I let the God in me come to the rescue of X and, after a time, normal conditions were restored, but not without great suffering to him. X never dared to give way to his passion again, but a person who is good through fear is not very good.

Time went on and I met both men frequently, and they would have met each other, if they had not studiously avoided it. Next to a strong love, there is nothing which draws so persistently as hatred. Whatever the object hated, that object will follow one like his shadow.

B, while in the physical body, had been a great sinner where young women were concerned, and here he beheld his past conduct in its true light and sensed the depth of the suffering he had brought to pass. The man had much good in him, and it awakened and he was filled with remorse and intense suffering. He had really loved two persons in his earth life, his mother and a little sister, who had passed out in childhood. Before his awakening, he had sought diligently to find these loved ones; but after he was awakened, he lived in constant fear lest they *should* come to him and read his shameful history.

In his agony of soul he prayed, prayed earnestly such a prayer as a man can never pray but once in any stage of expression. As always, the answer came, for the Watchers always hear and never fail.

Beside B stood a white-robed being, wearing the badge of the missionary spirit; tenderly he lifted the fallen man and explained to him the wondrous Love Divine, which alone can save. He explained to him why his loved ones had not been to him and comforted and counseled him. The result was, that B established a mission for that class of women, whom the world looks upon as outcasts.

Mental conditions hold for a time, often a long

time, after one is liberated from the physical body; and, when a woman has stepped aside from the prescribed path of virtue, she has it so firmly fixed in her mind that she is an outcast, that here where she feels sure every one *knows*, she persistently hides away in shame and terror, oftentimes mingled with bitterness, envy and resentment.

Love, tenderness and patience are required to do this rescue work successfully, and these qualities our friend B cultivated to such an extent, that he became radiant with life and power; and his lifetime enemy X became so in love with him, that he joined with him in the good work, a loyal friend and helper.

It seems so strange to me that the people of earth cannot see that Love is the *only power* that can transform, lift up, purify, strengthen, illumine and save.

There are thousands of people who would be glad to help the people of earth, by giving their experiences here, but the tales they would tell are of a nature that their names could not be given, or else they are of a nature that would not harmonize with the world's idea concerning them.

The members of a man's family are often his worst enemies, for by their strong thought force, they bind him to pain and weakness, when he is trying to be well and strong. They will calmly tell you that he has a terrible temper and expect him to demonstrate their statement, when, with all his might, he is struggling to overcome it.

After he has been free from the flesh long enough to learn a good way, if he tries to send back word of his life and activities, his friends with one accord will arise and declare they know he never said any such thing, for he was never a religious man, etc. In fact they want him to return just as boisterous and profane as when he went away.

When the people of earth get where they can see the good, pure, noble qualities in each other, and as con-

fidently look for *their* manifestation as they now watch for the *bad*, both astral and material realms will grow better rapidly.

Among my recent acquaintances is a well-known physician. You would at once recognize the name, if I were to give it. I will tell the doctor's story briefly and as nearly as possible in his own words.

He said, "There is no class of men on earth who have it in their power to do as much good as the physicians; but, as it is with every other vocation, so it is with that; some honor their profession and some use it as a means to a wholly selfish end, and such doctors are dangerous men and I was one of them.

"I worked for wealth and fame, especially fame, and I let very little stand in my way. I would not dare tell the crimes (I now see them as such) that I know about, and my own sins rise mountain high. Secretly I practiced vivisection and I grew cold and hard and cruel in my nature, just as every one else does, who does cruel things.

"The idea you hold to excuse yourself, that you are committing your crime in the interests of science, does not prevent the Law from rewarding you according to your deeds. Besides, there is a terrible danger looms up before the vivisectionist and his supporters, I mean *human* vivisection.

"Let no one for a moment dream that the crime will stop with the torturing of helpless animals; for it *never* will.

"I did not believe in a future life. I went to church at rare intervals to please my wife, and I pitied the poor, foolish preacher for being so deluded. I died suddenly. I never dreamed that I was going, until I found myself looking at myself. After a time, it dawned upon my consciousness that *I* was not my body, but something separate. I attended my own funeral, but I did not think much of it. The minister was conscientious and he had a hard time of it and I grew resentful. I was con-

scious that my family were trying hard to be properly sorrowful, and I heard some of my medical associates call me hard, unfeeling and mercenary.

"I was angry and uncomfortable generally and in desperation I tried to get away from home and associates. I do not know what *did* happen; the dim light I had been in was gone and darkness dense and heavy, enveloped me. I felt very weary and sank down on the sand to rest. I seemed to be upon the shore of some river and a deadly terror came over me. I tried to arise and flee away, somewhere, but my limbs seemed to be tightly bound and I struggled in vain for freedom.

"I do not understand it, but it *was*, I suppose it *had* to be. Once I had taken a beautiful spaniel and, while living, had cut her limb by limb. After a little, she suffered mutely, watching my movements with her soft brown eyes, human in their helpless pleading; and now, in my helplessness, those great brown eyes looked at me out of the darkness, whichever way I turned, they gazed at me. A horror took possession of me and I shrieked wildly, but only taunting echoes answered me. The forms and faces of pauper patients whom I had experimented upon and, because they could not remunerate me, had needlessly operated upon or caused much unnecessary suffering, passed by me, gazing at me with sad, reproachful faces.

"After what seemed to me an age of agony, I grew quiet; and then my past earth life unrolled before me and I saw myself, and all the old hymns that my Presbyterian grandfather used to sing, about vile sinners, worms and helplessness, did not begin to describe me as I saw myself. What did I do? I did what millions of people have done. I lay prone in the sand and prayed and, as I prayed, I became conscious of the fact, that *every* soul in the last extremity prays, which proves that the *real* of every person *knows* there is an unfailing power to pray to.

"In a very old book, which some of you have not buried in the rubbish heap, it says, that 'whoever calls upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved'; I have yet to be convinced that that is not true. A white-robed being, more radiant to my eyes than the noonday, came to me and showed me the way of salvation, through loving service." So ends this physician's story.

CHARLIE.

CHAPTER XVI

OBSESSION

DURING the last few years thousands of teachers have arisen, and a multitude of old theories, embellished and more or less elaborated, have been given to the world as new; and a great many new cults have been formed, all of which have been more or less helpful and also more or less misleading.

In all this multitude of theories, teachings and elaborate philosophies, there has not been *one new truth* given. Every truth is to be found between the covers of your New Testament. This may seem a bold statement, but, if you will make a list of all the truths you possess and bring it up to the Great Central Light, you will find it is a statement which cannot be refuted.

You are told by the modern teachers, that there is no such thing as evil. From *one* standpoint, that is really true but, from the opposite standpoint, it is equally false. Good and evil are relative terms, and what is good under certain conditions will be considered evil under opposite conditions. Good and evil, like light and darkness, or heat and cold, are opposite conditions, and your idea of one is governed by your idea of the other.

Spirit is a transmuting power that can change evil into good, but it *has to be changed*.

Again, we are told that evil is the unripe fruit, yes, but we do not deny the existence of unripe fruit, do we? It is absolutely necessary to have unripe fruit in order to have the ripe; but the finished product does not make the unfinished any less sour or bitter.

Define a hypocrite: a man who claims to have realized

a certain state or condition that he has not yet attained to, but to which he will eventually attain. Both conditions exist as conditions, do they not? A sinner may be a man who is content to follow the inclinations of his animal nature, having never felt the spiritual urge which causes him to recognize something better beyond; or he may be a man who *has* felt the urge and is ignorantly struggling against it; a man whose intellect is ever trying to meet the spiritual urge with art and cunning, trying to establish *itself* as god and commanding the animal nature to reverence and obey it.

The sins of the animal nature are not to be compared in enormity to the sins of the unspiritualized intellectual nature. In either case, the man is unripe fruit, but he, as unripe fruit, has just as real an existence as the ripe, for you cannot have the ripe without the unripe first and you cannot deny the existence of one without denying the other.

Nature furnishes nothing which cannot be converted *into* or utilized *for* good, but it *has* to be converted or changed, or it is not good.

God is manifesting in that unripe fruit; for God is the one life; therefore, *its* life; and God is the only urge to growth and the only power of expansion; so the sinner is a manifestation of Deity, but a very unfinished product.

Let us now turn our faces to the Light of the World, the Light never yet overcome with darkness. I am well aware that the world, both religious and secular, thinks it knows that the four Gospels were written at least two hundred years after the events transpired. I am also aware of the fact that the world does not know *all there is to be known*; also I know, that there is truth enough revealed in those four Gospels to transform this earth into a perfect heaven; but men will not seek the Light as long as they love darkness better.

You will observe that Jesus recognized evil, clothed in flesh and blood, and also evil unclothed by flesh and

blood. He also recognized that an unclothed evil entity can control a clothed evil entity, and instead of saying to the controlled man, "Sir, you are following error instead of truth, God never made an evil spirit, therefore, there is none; change your mental attitude and you will be free," He, in every case, said: "*Come out of him*" and, in every instance, the command was obeyed.

Who or what are these evil or obsessing influences? Some of them are evolving beings, never yet involved in flesh and blood; some are those freed from the mortal body for a time, who passed out with a very intense desire to perform an evil act; some are those who persistently refused to listen to the voice of conscience, or the urge of the spirit within, and are caught in the great rhythmic law of ebb and flow, borne far backward, and frantically cling to any flesh and blood entity of *like* tendencies to their own. Surely you have learned that death does not change a man's character; neither does it keep his character *from* changing.

We now come to the very important question, "Why and how does a man become obsessed?" First, why? Because he is living an abnormal life; an obsessed person is always a one-sided person. If you eat diseased and unnatural food, you will become physically diseased, and if you feed upon unnatural, perverted mental food, you will become mentally diseased. A person who leads a frivolous, aimless life, thinking first of *self*, and viewing others and their activities from the standpoint of his own fancies, prejudices and opinions, is in the road to obsession.

You must remember there are many forms of obsession and not all are of a violent type. An inactive, indoor life furnishes an opportunity for an obsessing influence, unless the mind is guided and held in healthful channels. No person with a healthy, normal body and mind *can* be obsessed. Unrestrained appetite or passion, manifesting entirely, or largely, in the mental activities, produces the most terrible forms of obsession.

How does a man become obsessed? By weakly yielding to impulses having a downward tendency; by toying with temptation; by selfishly insisting upon having his own way, regardless of other people's feelings; by gratifying the animal nature in every possible way he dare; and by giving uncontrolled liberty to his thoughts, regardless of their nature.

You have been warned that at the close of this Age, there will be a strong delusion abroad in the land, and there will attend it much power and many signs and wonders of falsehood. You are also told that at the close of the Age, many will depart from the truth, and give their attention to misleading spirits and the teachings of evil beings, who will use teachers that are trying to gratify their selfish desires and please the people that come to them, regardless of the truth; and foolish, idle women, seeking to be amused and to gratify their own silly whims are the largest class led away.

You are also instructed to try or test the spirits. The instructor did not say, "do not listen to discarnate beings; have nothing whatever to do with them for they are all evil, pernicious and misleading." O, no! "Test them and see whether they are of God or not." This testing does not apply to the members of your family and intimate friends whom you have known and loved, and who would, because of their love for you, try to communicate with you; but rather to those who endeavor to guide, teach and lead you into a knowledge you do not possess.

There is always danger in dealing with an unseen and unknown force; but wisdom removes danger. Beings, clothed in finer bodies than those of flesh and blood, are a mighty power in the material world today, but they must have bodies of flesh to express themselves through; and the person chosen for that purpose must be either one perfectly passive—for the time mindless, or one of like nature—so sympathetic that giver and receiver are of one accord. The latter will, by the higher beings, always be the instrument chosen, if possible.

Remember, that no power in all the regions of darkness and sin *can* obsess you unless you open the door yourself. Remember that when you hold a well defined thought, you connect with other minds holding thoughts of like nature. This is the law and the longer you hold your thought the more intense it becomes and the stronger becomes the desire born of it. Paul said he "captured every thought and brought it into submission to the Christ." He also tells you to find true, honest, just, pure, lovely, virtuous and praiseworthy things and think about them. In that one item of instruction lies the prevention of obsession.

"Believe not every spirit, but prove them." With the warning comes the necessary instruction: "Hereby *know* ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesses that Christ came clothed in flesh is of God, but the spirits that will not acknowledge or admit this are anti-Christ." No one *can confess* (using the word with the meaning of St. John) without knowing Christ.

If he knows Christ, he knows the Father also; and, having attained to this knowledge, he cannot be deceived. This places all sane, safe and desirable spirit communion upon a high spiritual basis. God is Love, and *all* who are living in the spirit of Love are living in union with God and God with them.

If you wish to gratify your selfish desires, at the expense of your soul, you can, God lets you; but you must take the full measure of results attending your choice. If you indulge in thoughts of hatred, revenge, retaliation, jealousy or vindictiveness in any form, you will draw to yourself a class of murderous entities. Beware! If you give rein to the appetites and desires of your lower nature, throngs of undesirable beings will be in sympathy with you. Beware! If you constantly fear or abnormally desire death, you are creating an unhealthy atmosphere, which will react upon you in some way.

Often you become the plaything of evilly disposed entities, who will constantly delude you into the belief that your time of departure is at hand, often giving the exact time for the event to occur. This is quite a common form of obsession among the aged and insufficiently occupied.

Again I refer you to the Light of the World. He taught you to live one day at a time, and *work*, giving no *anxious* thought to the future. He taught you, that the issues of life and death lie in God's hands, and not even the angels of Heaven know the day and hour of your release. He taught you to have faith in God and, if you do, you will be so active in some useful occupation, that you will have no time to die before your time comes.

Face the matter squarely: if you are obsessed, you alone are to blame. If you follow the Light, the darkness will not follow you, for darkness is forever overcome with Light. Beware of abnormal tendencies. If you have Christ *in* you, you will have faith in God, and if you have faith in God, you will not resort to any form of magic to guide you or disclose to you future events.

If you feel that you need instruction, comfort or counsel, through the instrumentality of flesh and blood, seek from a source that bears the stamp of divinity, for you are not in darkness concerning the matter, unless you wilfully turn away from the light.

Where you find love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, generosity, truthfulness, gentleness and *self-control*, manifesting at all times, there you will find the spirit of Truth—there God is manifesting, whether the teacher be in flesh and blood or not, for the two as one, are constantly testifying that Christ has come in the flesh.

CHAPTER XVII

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE HITS THE TRAIL AND TURNS MISSION- ARY AT LARGE

I NEVER banked much on religion. It was not my long coat. Perhaps, if I had learned to discriminate; well, we all learn the things we *must* learn, sometime, but it seems to be in the "sweet by and by" that most of us learn that Truth is Truth, regardless of the character of its advocates.

Water is water, whether the spout that it flows through be made of wood or iron, lead or silver. When Truth speaks, it matter not to IT, whether it be devil or angel that repeats its words.

I was uncomfortable, mighty uncomfortable. Doubt is a tormentor, and the place that you are in, or the garment that you are clothed in, does not lessen or increase the torment. Doubt is one of the demons of darkness which clutch at your throat and kill the peace and joy all out of you, if you will let it. On the other hand is Faith, which makes the soul strong to do and dare and triumph, where the doubting soul would sink into lethargy and defeat.

During my earth life I shelved a good many problems, but they unshelved themselves in a hurry when I came here and, like a pack of wolves, they sprang at me to rend and tear. I fed them everything that I had to feed to stave them off, all to no purpose. I tried to run away from them, but the ground that I thought solid, broke under me and I fell shamefully.

You can set down as Truth, the familiar words, "Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right."

Error is often a most fascinating creature and that is why it has so many votaries. The average man declines to believe anything that makes him feel uncomfortable; and error very often soothes, while it destroys.

Truth is the opposite and probes deeply and spares not, until health flows freely through every cell and vein.

There was something wrong with me. I could not deny that fact. I had tightened all the loose screws that I could find, but it only made matters worse. Sometimes a too tight screw makes as much trouble as a loose one; it proved so in my case.

During my earth life, I sampled almost every religion, some of them very gingerly but I did not give very serious thought to any of them. I did not have time. There are always many important things to think about; the best brand of cigars, the result of the latest ball game, the villainous character of the political candidates not in your party, the weather, and other tremendous problems.

I am convinced that, if God should double the length of the present day, there would not be time enough for the average man and woman to think about spiritual things. Most people hold a vague idea that the word spiritual pertains to after-death conditions, in which death is the most important factor; but it is safe to say, that the average man will have to die several times, provided death is the only spiritualizing factor.

Some interpret spiritual as pertaining to spirits; their idea of spirits being too absurd for contemplation. A spirit is an individual. Are not you yourself the individual, just as much when clothed in thin muslin, as you are when clothed in khaki? We have bodies here, do not be foolish enough to think that there is nothing material, except what your physical senses recognize as being material. It does not increase your spirituality, to any great extent, to take off your ulster and go into the next room.

I was very much dissatisfied. Perhaps, you think that any man finding himself alive, after having passed the portal, Death, *ought* to be satisfied, but if you hold that thought, get rid of it, for many would be better satisfied if they found themselves dead. Many expect to find

things in general greatly changed here, and look eagerly forward to their freedom from earth life, but if you know where Earth leaves off and Here begins, you are wondrous wise.

The Divinest Character that ever trod the paths of earth life said, "You shall know the Truth" and, when, this same Divine Being stood before a gorgeous, but petty, Roman ruler, he, the small but gorgeous one, puzzled and mentally tortured, asked a question which every puzzled and tortured awakening soul has often asked ever since: "*What is Truth?*"

I knew enough to know that doubting and groaning would do no good, so I started to hit the trail to the region of Truth, but carefully avoided the churches. I had not traveled far until I saw a man standing upon a high hill and I jumped at once to the conclusion, that he had climbed above the lower earth vibrations to meditate in a holier atmosphere; so, hoping, always hoping, I ascended the mountain and stood beside him.

The man turned to me in evident consternation, "O, sir," he said, "why are you here? What do you want?"

I was so taken aback at the man's alarm, that I stammered, "Excuse me, sir, but why are *you* here?"

"I? I came here to get into the light, away from the awful darkness, away from *them*."

"Them? What and where *is* them?" I asked.

"Down there! Do you not see? *There*, the devil and his imps. The darkness is full of them!" and he turned shudderingly away.

I saw nothing, but I said: "Why do you come *here* for refuge? A mountain top is no safer than any other place. Do you not remember that Satan himself once stood upon the top of a very high mountain in company with our Lord, and tried to work one of his subtlest schemes there?"

For a moment the man stared at me as if paralyzed and then fixing his cork-screwish eyes full upon me, he fairly hissed, "*Who are you?*"

"Me, oh, I am Satan." I answered carelessly, but the effect of my words was electrical.

"I knew it the minute I saw you," he shrieked. "O, Lord save me now!" and, without waiting a second for the Lord to do it, he plunged wildly down the mountain side.

I did not think that the man would take my joke seriously; and I was filled with contrition. Rushing to the brow of the hill I shouted, "Hold on friend, hold on. I am not Satan. I am S— C—." The man paused for an instant in his headlong flight and defiantly hurled a stone in my direction.

"You cannot fool me," he screamed, "S— C— or the devil, it is all the same," and he disappeared over a cliff out of my sight.

"Now sir," I said to myself, "You sit down on that rock and do some thinking." Every statement is either true or untrue; now you get busy and find all the truth there is in this thrilling episode. In the first place, *why* did you tell that man that you were Satan? You knew that it was not true and you expected him to know it also; and, if he had not been obsessed by the devil-idea, he would have known it, and yet Satan means adversary and you certainly proved yourself adverse to him.

If you lied to him, he lied to you; for he said he knew that you were the devil, the minute he looked at you and, it is evident, that he could not *know* an untruth; besides, he never thought of such a possibility until you, yourself, suggested it. Why did you speak those words? Why did you suggest the possibility of a devil here in this beautiful place? The man was in great need of help and you only increased his trouble." I groaned. On the other hand, I mused, "if the man had not been full of the thought of devils, and watching and searching for them, he would never have found them."

It was evident that the trouble lay in the mind of the man, but I felt guilty, for certainly I had contributed to his delinquency; besides, I had a fine opportunity to

do good and had failed miserably. Again I groaned, then I also fled from the mountain top.

A ray of light like a dagger fell across my pathway and the familiar words, "Evil to him that evil thinks," rang in my ears, and the careless thought habit, so long indulged in, was broken. I wandered on and coming to a beautiful grove of maples and willows that fringed a stream of crystal water, I sat down upon a rustic seat and was lost in thought. I was roused from my reverie by hearing some good strong voices, backed by plenty of flesh and blood, singing "I will sing you a song of that beautiful land, the far away home of the soul."

Presently a middle aged woman, sobbing violently, came and threw herself upon the seat beside me. Her distress seemed so great, I was moved to sympathy.

"Excuse me, lady," I said kindly, "is there anything that I can do to help you in any way?"

"Oh no, no," she sobbed, "it is only the singing of that beautiful hymn, it always affects me in this way."

"Indeed, how very tragic," I said, wonderingly, like a child.

"It was the last hymn my dear brother and I ever sang together," she continued, "and oh, he loved it so much and oh, how lonely I have been since he died three years ago."

"But, my dear lady," I replied, "if your brother is dead, he must be *here* some where; why do you not try to find him, instead of weeping for him? You must remember that you, yourself, are dead."

"I dead! I, no indeed! I am just as much alive as I ever was. Besides he is an angel."

"Pardon me, lady," I said quietly, "did you regard your brother as an angel while he was still with you?"

"That is my business," she said snappily, "you cannot fool me; this is not the far away home of the soul; this is not a glittering strand; here are no harps, nor crowns, nor angels."

I was silent, for I wanted to say the right things

this time and avoid the groans. After due reflection I replied, "It is true that I have seen no harps nor crowns—I have not looked for any, but I have seen many angels, and so could you, if you would be sensible in your idea of angels. As for glittering strands, look at the river yonder; sparkling in the sunlight, darkening in the shade; it is surely beautiful enough for any beauty-lover. If you cannot appreciate the beauty all around you, how can you expect a possible greater beauty somewhere else? As for the far-away home of the soul, it strikes me that this Here and Now home of the soul is of much greater importance to us at the present time. I do not know what special brand of religion you have, but it seems to me that it is either woefully lacking in sense, or else you have failed to extract sense from it."

The woman drew herself up haughtily and said icily, "Sir, I would have you know that I am a member of the First Presbyterian Church of ——."

"Then I would advise you to go back to said church, and stav a spell," I said, and pursued my journey thoughtfully.

There is no religion under heaven, or in it, I mused. that can *make* a man good; but they all can help a little, if he has it in him to want to be good; and all the religions in the world, put together, cannot give a person good sense *inside him*; for that has to come through experience and hard knocks. It takes something more than good intentions to keep a body out of trouble.

"Good intentions pave the road to Hell," said a man's voice beside me, "and every idle word a man speaks, he shall have to account for in his day of judgment. Idle words are the result of idle thinking; a person has no right to permit himself to think useless, foolish thoughts, any more than he has to permit himself to think cruel or vile thoughts. One should train his brain to become a perfect instrument to help him in building the greatest good, the ideal. If he is too lazy to do this, or if he is such an animal, that he cannot control his thinking, and

is blown about by the wind of conditions, then he will have to learn through suffering. Spiritually minded people, wise people, do not talk much, they think. In a multitude of words there is sin."

I concluded that it was a good time for me to avoid sin. We walked on in silence, at last I paused and looked about me. "Where are we?" I asked.

"Come and see," said my new teacher.

We entered one of the most beautiful gardens I ever saw. Flowering shrubs, sweet herbs and good old-fashioned flowers grew luxuriously in the corners and bordered the walks everywhere.

Cuddled under the trees were homey looking cottages, with flowering vines clambering around the windows and doors. Each looked like the sort of home that one dreams of when, far away from his home, he wearily toils through drifts and struggles in the blinding, whirling snow; or, lost in the blackness of night, and drenched with driving rain and pierced by icy winds, he prays for home; the sort of home that the child and the young girl turn to, when strange forms reach out long arms from the darkness of the unknown.

An aged man and woman came to meet us. Their forms were bent; their hair was snowy white, but their faces were radiant with a happiness such as one rarely sees; and in their eyes shone the light of perennial youth.

"You have a beautiful place here," I said to them, "and you seem very happy."

"O, yes;" said the man, "Mary Elizabeth and I walked together in earth life fifty years; but we have just learned what it means to be happy, and we think we are beginning to know what *life* means. In earth life we tried to find happiness and we studied creeds and theologies and isms and we read about heaven and hell and spirits, angels and devils, especially the ob-
sessing ones, and I don't know what we didn't study; but the more things we studied, the more burdened we

became, until we felt there was nothing worth while; and all the time the Master was calling to us, "Take My yoke upon you, for My yoke is easy and My burden light," and His yoke is the yoke of Love; when Love takes up a load, that load is always light and, oh, the happiness that comes in the carrying of it.

The Master also said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, do not try to keep them away, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." He also said, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me." Come and see how we are interpreting those words.

We followed our new found friends across the wide green lawn and through the alluring garden. The air was sweet and pure, like the air of early morning, in the early springtime, and I was sure that I caught the odor of blue violets and dandelions. The birds were flitting here and there in sunshine and shade, singing joyously, and oh, sweetest music of all, my ears caught the sound of running water. Yes, there it was, the little brooklet so dear to the heart of childhood. Gurgling around the great gray rocks, roaring and splashing, it hurried on its way like youth everywhere eager for the adventures awaiting it in the unexplored regions beyond; those regions where we conquer, or are conquered.

Speaking in low, hushed tones, we entered one by one, the many little white cottages and gazed upon the rows of little beds, each bed containing a little child, sleeping peacefully. Babes, golden-haired, brown-haired, and flaxen-haired; babes with plump dimpled faces, and babes with wan, pinched faces, aged faces, such faces the sight of which causes one to draw his breath sharply, as if struck a hard blow, a blow that makes you pause and question its meaning.

The doors and windows were all wide open and the cool sweet air of the early morning was wafted over the little sleepers. The rooms were simply but beautifully furnished; every suggestion, both within and with-

out, was ideal, the blending of the beautiful and practical, artistic and useful, that one so rarely finds. As we were leaving the last cottage, Mary Elizabeth beckoned to me; bending over the little bed, we saw the golden-haired sleeper, holding safely clutched in one chubby fist, a bunch of blue violets.

Out in the garden once more, Mary Elizabeth with her pure motherly face aglow with tenderness, drew me aside and said, "We have gathered them in from the darkness of shame and suffering and neglect and direst poverty. Poor starved, ill-treated babes they were; many of them with misshapen bodies; compelled to toil and hunger, they never knew the meaning of love and kindness; but now they are so happy and full of wonder. When the Master comes, by and by, how pleased He will be, will He not?"

From somewhere floated the repeated refrain, "Where the years of eternity roll." A light fell full upon the face of Mary Elizabeth and was reflected upon mine, and this thought came to me, what constitutes Eternity but living in the consciousness of eternal things? Of that which is self-existent, which death has no power over? All that live in this consciousness have found the fountain of perennial youth, and they can in triumph sing, "O grave, where is thy victory, O death, where is thy sting?"

I turned to Mary Elizabeth, "Yes," I said, "when the Master comes, He will indeed be glad."

—S.C.

AT LAST

When the last weary soul has been folded
All safe in the Kingdom of God ;

When the roses your fingers have planted,
Shall bloom by the paths you have trod ;

When all sorrow and pain shall be vanquished,
And mortals rejoice at Death's call,
When from the freed spirit's awakening
Is banished the dirge and the pall ;

When earth from its shadows awakened,
In beauty and peace shall be glad,
When the last prison door has been opened,
And Life can no longer make sad ;

When the white mist that floats o'er the meadows,
Wafts no more the fever's hot breath,
When the moon-spangled roll of the billows,
Shall tell not of sorrow nor death ;

When the desert in beauty shall blossom,
And wild beasts together shall rest ;
When the valley in glory exalted
The mountain shall fold to her breast ;

The Workers, with rejoicing and honor,
Victorious, shall find their release,
And one with the Father forever,
Shall rest through the aeons of Peace.

—I. L. B.

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